

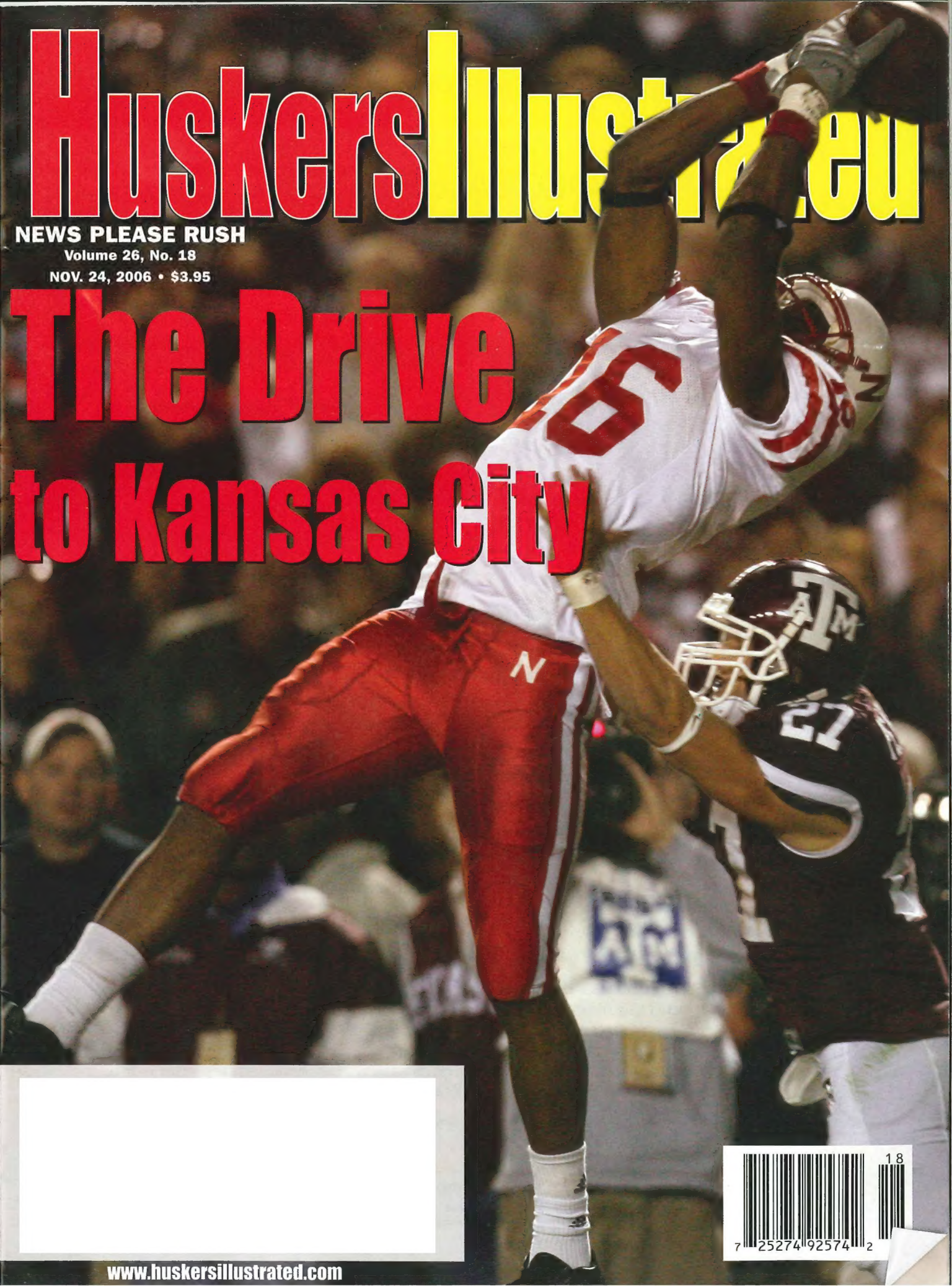
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October 22, 2006	Warrior Challenge Adventure Race	Ashland, NE
January 11, 2007	Panama Trail Run	Panama, NE
February 14, 2007	Panama Adventure Race	Panama, NE
March 14, 2007	Panama Mountain Bike Enduro Race	Panama, NE
April 1, 2007	The Link - Urban Adventure Race*	Lincoln, NE
April 21, 2007	F.O.P 29 Adventure Race**	Wagon Train Lake, NE
May 26-27, 2007	12-Hour Mountain Bike Relay	Branched Oak Lake, NE
June 14, 2007	Run, Row, Rock and Roll Adventure Race	Fairbury, NE
July 21, 2007	Cornhusker State Games Adventure Race	Branched Oak Lake, NE
August, 2007	Norfolk Adventure Race***	Norfolk, NE
September, 2007	Killer Kayak Challenge	Omaha, NE
October 21, 2007	Warrior Challenge Adventure Race	Ashland, NE

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Finding A Way

*Huskers add classic finish
to this latest drama*



**Brian
HILL**

NEBRASKA HELD leads of 17-0 and 27-3 before needing a missed 34-yard field goal to take the game to overtime, where the Huskers would win on a touchdown by sophomore quarterback Eric Crouch.

That was Nov. 26, 1999, in Boulder, Colo., and Nebraska was clinching its spot in the Big 12 Championship game for the third time in the four years of the conference, certainly qualifying as a regular participant.

Nebraska has not been back to the conference title game since . . . until now.

The Huskers, after giving up a 21-7 lead and looking almost helpless at times as Texas A&M scored 20 straight points to take the lead, blocked what most likely would have been a game-clinching field goal and then went on a classic drive to clinch the Big 12 North title. Senior quarterback Zac Taylor, who threw an interception with 2:50 remaining that appeared to stick a fork in the NU hopes, rebounded to lead an 11-play, 75-yard drive with no timeouts remaining.

After sophomore defensive end Barry Turner blocked Layne Neumann's 42-yard field goal attempt with 1:57 left, Taylor took over, completing five passes to four receivers in 1:36, the payoff coming when junior wide receiver Maurice Purify outjumped A&M's Jordan Peterson to catch a 9-yard scoring pass that tied the game at 27-27. Jordan Congdon's extra-point kick gave the

Huskers the lead with 21 seconds remaining. The Husker defense, which had held the Aggies without a first down after the Taylor interception, stopped two last-gasp attempts, and NU clinched a spot in the title game for the first time in seven years.

Purify's catch is featured on the cover of this issue of Huskers Illustrated, and you can read more about the memorable drive and other NU happenings inside this edition. Sophomore guard Andy Christensen is featured in "Spotlight," and junior defensive lineman Brandon Johnson answers "10 Questions."

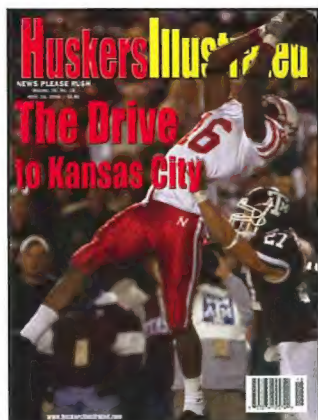
This week's installment of "Recruiting Through the Years" covers the 2002 recruiting class, which produced many of this year's seniors, including defensive ends Adam Carriker and Jay Moore. Their senior class will be making its final appearance at Memorial Stadium when NU concludes the regular season by playing host to Colorado the day after Thanksgiving.

The 8-3 Huskers are in the Dec. 2 title game regardless of the outcome but will be a prohibitive favorite against the Buffaloes, who just won for the second time this season.

Being a heavy favorite didn't matter when defending national champion Texas was knocked off 45-42 at Kansas State. The Longhorns were expected to clinch the South Division title a few hours after Nebraska clinched the North, but those plans were put on hold when UT lost quarterback Colt McCoy to a shoulder injury and then lost the game.

That left the Longhorns needing a win over Texas A&M the day of the NU-Colorado game or a loss by Oklahoma to Baylor (Nov. 18) or Oklahoma State (Nov. 25) to make it to Kansas City.

The Huskers had assumed they would have a rematch with Texas, just like seven years ago. As many of you know, Nebraska won that Big 12 title game 22-6. ■



ON THE COVER

Nebraska wide receiver Maurice Purify goes up over Texas A&M's Jordan Peterson to catch a touchdown pass from Zac Taylor that gave NU a 28-27 victory, clinching a spot in the Big 12 Championship game in Kansas City. Cover photo by Scott Bruhn.

Huskers Illustrated

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Huskers Illustrated

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Defensive end Adam Carriker (above) wasn't the first freshman to endure a humbling experience when he started his career at Nebraska, and he certainly wasn't the last. *By Mike Babcock*

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The Colorado review/Big 12 Championship preview edition will be mailed Nov. 27. Check for updates at huskersillustrated.com.

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'Like Going to a Mall'

You won't find Banana Republic or J. Crew stores, nor will you find The Sharper Image or Bath & Body Works. But Nebraska's new Tom and Nancy Osborne Complex is "like going to a mall," Cornhusker offensive line coach Dennis Wagner said at a recent Big Red Breakfast in Omaha.

"You can do everything in one building."

In addition to locker rooms, the complex includes coaches' offices, weight rooms and training facilities. The coaches' offices overlook the main weight room. And "when the music is turned up, the windows are vibrating and you can hear the banging," said Wagner. "It's great."

The complex includes a walkway connecting the Hawks Championship Indoor Center, where the football team has spent a lot of practice time, even with weather conducive to being outside.

All of the top programs have great facilities, coach Bill Callahan said prior to the season. "And we're in a competitive environment. I will say this, however, the facilities that have been constructed are the very best in the country, in my opinion." They are "logistically laid out for our student-athletes, so they can go from the training room to the locker room to the weight room to the meeting rooms and to the field in a very short amount of time. The logistics that they've constructed are extraordinary.

Cornhusker Athletic Director Steve Pederson's vision "has surpassed all of our thoughts about what this facility could be like," said Callahan. "He deserves a lot of credit for what he accomplished. It took a lot of guts to put that facility up on that end. It is an outstanding building because it represents, in my opinion, a championship atmosphere and environment.

"Those players, when they come in each day to the facility, they all have to live up to that standard. And I think there's a real clear message when you step into the north stadium complex, 'You're here to be a champion. You're here to succeed. You're here to be the very best.'"

Athletes don't come to Nebraska "to ride out the four years," Callahan said. "You're here to achieve excellence and be great at what you do. I think this facility presents a very clear message to any athlete, that they are here to be the best. If you don't want to be the best, and you don't want to commit the time and the effort and the energy, then this isn't the place for you.

"I'm really proud of our facility and our floor and everything else that accompanies the overall facility itself. It's outstanding. And I think our players really appreciate



A walkway connects the main complex to the Hawks Championship Center.

that as well."

Facilities are especially important because "I think Coach (Tom) Osborne has said many times, 'We don't have beaches or mountains here at Nebraska,' but what we can offer is great championship facilities and that certainly will give us an edge," said Callahan. "In our own division (of the Big 12) it gives us an edge in terms of competitiveness, and I also think nationally it puts us right up there at the top."

You won't find Old Navy or Eddie Bauer stores, though.

THE FUTURE COULD BE SAM

Sam Keller might be out of sight. But he's not out of mind. The senior transfer from Arizona State has earned accolades from coaches and teammates during the season, most recently from cornerbacks coach Phil Elmassian at another recent Big Red Breakfast in Omaha. Keller, who has to sit out under NCAA transfer rules, apparently enjoys scout team duty and is "like having another coach on the field," said Elmassian. "He challenges the other players to perform. I can't think of a better scout team in the last five years. Sam uplifts me. If I was in college, I'd want to be his roommate."

Junior middle linebacker Corey McKeon has called Keller the Cornhuskers' scout-team quarterback "extraordinaire." He is "the best scout-team quarterback I've ever seen," McKeon said.

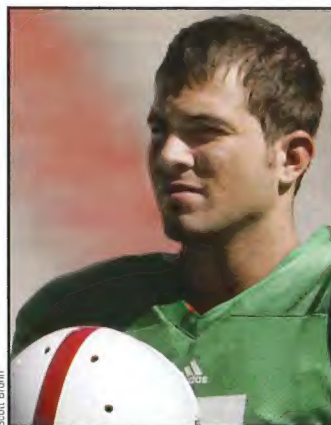
"He completes about 80 percent of his passes on the scout team, and if Sam Keller misses a pass, he yells at the wide receiver for not making a better route. It is hilarious to watch."

Keller apparently does some trash talking. "It's so funny to practice with," said McKeon.

The 6-foot-4, 230-pound Keller didn't exactly slip into Lincoln anonymously, after passing for 2,135 yards and 20 touchdowns with nine interceptions before being sidelined by a thumb injury last season.

Keller will have to earn the job of succeeding Zac Taylor, in competition this spring. Three other quarterbacks return: Joe Ganz, Taylor's back-up; Beau Davis and Brian Hildebrand, all sophomores. In addition, Patrick Witt is expected to enroll for second semester and go through spring practice.

Witt, a 6-4, 215-pound high school senior from Wylie, Texas, has given the Cornhuskers an oral commitment. He visited Nebraska the weekend of the Missouri game. ■



Sam Keller transferred from Arizona State.

Quick Hits

RUUD HONORED

Cornhusker weakside linebacker Bo Ruud was named Big 12 Defensive Player of the Week for his performance against Missouri. The junior from Lincoln, Neb., was credited with seven tackles, including five unassisted, and one sack. He also forced a fumble, recovered a fumble and intercepted a pass, returning the ball 40 yards to the Missouri 17 to set up a touchdown.

His sack, for a 13-yard loss, came on a third-and-10 at the Nebraska 28-yard line late in the game. "He has a knack for the ball," coach Bill Callahan said afterward. "He has great instincts, great anticipation. So that's not a surprise. I was really happy for him, that he provided the contribution that he did."

I-back Marlon Lucky is the only other Cornhusker to earn player of the week honors this season. He was selected for offense for his performance against Troy.

NBA REPS

Three former Cornhuskers were included on rosters when the NBA opened its season: Tyrone Lue, Atlanta Hawks; Mikki Moore, New Jersey Nets; and Eric Piatkowski, Phoenix Suns.

Lue is in his ninth NBA season and fourth with the Hawks. Last season, he was hampered by a sprained MCL, playing in 51 games, including 10 starts, averaging 11 points and 3.1 assists. His best season was in 2004-05, when he was traded from the Houston Rockets to Atlanta and started 46 of 49 games. He averaged 11.2 points and 4.6 points.

Moore also is in his ninth NBA season. He played in 47 games with the Seattle Supersonics last season, starting once and averaging 3.3 points and 2.8 rebounds. As with Lue, his best season was 2004-05, when he averaged 5.4 points and 3.3 rebounds for the Los Angeles Clippers.

Piatkowski is in his 13th NBA season — nine with the Clippers, for whom he averaged double-figure scoring three times, with a high of 11.3 points per game in 1997-98. He went into this season hitting 40 percent from 3-point range for his career. He appeared in 29 games with the Chicago Bulls last season.

WRESTLE-OFFS

Senior Dominick Moyer, redshirted freshmen Mike Rowe and Craig Brester and true freshman Curtis Salazar all went 2-0 at the Husker wrestling team wrestle-offs on the first Friday in November. Moyer, a third-year starter at 141 pounds, went into the season ranked No. 16 by Intermat.

Salazar was among 16 true freshmen who competed in the wrestle-offs, the first public competition for coach Mark Manning's team. "It's a good experience to let them get out in front of people in this setting," said Manning, who is beginning his seventh season in charge of the Huskers.

Nebraska was ranked as high as No. 18 going into the season, which was slated to begin at the Cowboy Open in Laramie, Wyo., on Nov. 11. The Huskers return seven NCAA qualifiers and eight starters from last season, when they finished 16th at the NCAA Championships.

Preseason rankings:

Team: No. 19 (WIN Magazine), No. 18 (USA Today/NWCA/Intermat)

125 — Paul Donahoe 8/8/6

133 — Patrick Aleksanyan 15/15/12

141 — Dominick Moyer 20/NR/16

149 — Robert Sanders 15/14/10

157 — Chris Oliver NR/20/13

165 — Marc Harwood 15/13/12

174 — Brandon Browne NR/19/NR

184 — Vince Jones 9/9/6

Hwt. — Jon May 13/15/14



Dominick Moyer

TENNIS FINISH

Fall competition for the Husker women's tennis team ended at the ITA Indoor Championships in Columbus, Ohio, when junior Imke Reimers lost against Anastasia Zhukova of Tennessee-Chattanooga in the quarterfinals of the consolation tournament, 6-3, 6-2. Reimers advanced to the quarterfinals by defeating the nation's No. 3-ranked player, Theresa Logar of Stanford, 2-6, 7-6 (5), 6-2.

Reimers lost in the first round of the championships to Diana

Srebrovic of Florida, the seventh seed, 7-5, 6-3. Srebrovic was the 2005 defending champion.

The Huskers open the regular season on Jan. 24 at home against Creighton.

FALL GOLF FINISH

The Husker women's golf team finished the fall season with losses to No. 1 Georgia and No. 8 Purdue at the NGCA Match Play Championships in Orlando, Fla. Nebraska, seeded 16th in the tournament, lost four of five head-to-head matches against Georgia, with junior Allison Stewart halving her match.

Stewart won her match against Purdue, with senior Chrissie McArdle halving her match as the Huskers bowed out, 3 1/2 to 1 1/2. "I think we have seen some really good things throughout the fall," said coach Robin Krapfl. "We are showing the kind of progression you want to have."

Krapfl said the Huskers wanted to "peak in April and May, not in November." Nebraska opens the spring season at the Central District Invitational at Parrish, Fla. Feb. 19-20.

MEN'S GOLF

Husker senior Brady Schnell was named the 2006 Nebraska Amateur Player of the Year by the Nebraska Golf Association in early November, sharing the award with Patrick Duffy, an Omaha attorney.

Schnell finished the fall season with an individual victory at the Herb Wimberly Intercollegiate at Las Cruces, N.M. Schnell shot a season-low 206 (67-70-69) for medalist honors on the par-72, 7,074-yard New Mexico State University Golf Course to lead NU to a second-place finish.

Seniors Ty Capps (74-74-69) and Drew Reynolds (77-71-69) finished strong, with 217 totals to tie for 13th place individually, while freshman Jamie Marshall (74-76-77) tied for 40th, with a 227 total. Senior Ryan Lenahan (75-80-73) tied for 45th, with a 228 total.

UNPRECEDENTED

For a third consecutive season, Husker senior Brittany Timko earned Big 12 Soccer Player-of-the-Year recognition, sharing the honor with Oklahoma State's Yolanda Odenyo. Timko is the first Big 12 soccer player to be honored three times. She is only the fifth Big 12 athlete in any sport to be a three-time or more player of the year.

The 5-foot-7 forward from Coquitlam, B.C., Canada, led the Huskers in points (29), goals (11) and assists (7) this season. She scored four hat tricks during her career, one short of the school record, held by Kim Engesser. Timko had 41 goals and 42 assists during her career, joining Meghan Anderson as the only players in Big 12 history to have at least 40 goals and 40 assists.

Huskers Tanya Dennis, a junior defender from Brampton, Ontario, Canada, and Aysha Jamani, a sophomore forward from Calgary, Alberta, Canada, earned second-team All-Big 12 recognition, while Carly Peetz, a freshman defender from Lincoln, Neb., was included on the all-newcomer team.

Nebraska lost to Texas in the opening round of the Big 12 Tournament at San Antonio, Texas, 1-0 in overtime to finish 10-7-3. The third-seeded Longhorns scored in the seventh minute of the first overtime to eliminate the Huskers in the first round for only the second time in school history. The Huskers had made 10 consecutive NCAA Tournament appearances.

BRIEFLY

● Betsy Miller, a junior on the Husker cross country and track and field teams, was among 12 athletes named to the first Big 12 Fall Sports "Good Works" Team. The team recognizes student-athletes for their dedication to community service and academics. Miller, from Lodgepole, Neb., carries a 3.975 cumulative grade-point average in a biological sciences major.

● The Husker bowling team was ranked No. 2 in the National Tenpin Coaches Association preseason poll. The team was scheduled to open its season on Nov. 10 at the Wisconsin-Whitewater Invitational. Defending national champion Fairleigh Dickinson was ranked No. 1. ■

Select Company

Nebraska freshman guard Hickman does what few offensive linemen have done



Mike BABCOCK

CREDIT GREG AUSTIN with calming Jacob Hickman before the first start of his Cornhusker career against Missouri. Austin told him "just relax, go out there and play," said Hickman.

The advice wasn't profound, by any stretch of the imagination. And "it's kind of hard to force yourself to relax," Hickman said, gently chiding a reporter for a poorly worded question.

Forced relaxation is a contradiction. Even so, "you really have to relax because if you go out there and try to play against these guys and get out of your element, then you don't play well," he said.

And if he hadn't played well, he would have been letting down the team.

"So it was kind of nerve-wracking," said Hickman, an offensive guard.

Consider the circumstances. Hickman is a true freshman, one of a handful playing for Nebraska this season. He's a little more experienced than the others because he went through spring practice, after being put on scholarship for second semester. He was a grayshirt last season, meaning he enrolled as a part-time student and paid his own way, to preserve eligibility. But he's a freshman, nonetheless.

As such, he has accomplished something that few Cornhuskers have over the past 30-plus years. He has played in the offensive line as a true freshman — and now he has started.

On that count, "few" becomes two. Tackle Matt Slauson is the only other true freshman to start in Nebraska's offensive line since the NCAA reinstated freshman eligibility in 1972.

The true freshman offensive linemen who have played enough to earn letters during that time are Jake Young (1986), Will Shields (1989), Tionu Fonoti (1999), John Garrison (1999) and, oh yes, Austin, who was in the regular rotation in 2003 before suffering a season-ending knee injury.

Garrison earned a letter for his long-snapping, learning to play center after being recruited as a defensive end. So Hickman is really just the sixth to play an every-down role.

Scholarship limits have enhanced the chances of freshmen stepping into the offensive line. And increased emphasis on weight training in high school has had an effect, too.

"Back in the day, guys were small, and they came to college and got big," said Austin. "Now, a guy like Keith Williams has the body stature of a junior or senior, a guy

that's already developed. That's one reason for younger guys playing. They're developing earlier (physically)."

Williams, another freshman offensive lineman, hadn't played through the first 10 games, and barring injury problems, he wasn't going to, even though he made some road trips. But offensive line coach Dennis Wagner has said he wouldn't hesitate to use Williams should the need arise.

Hickman, however, wasn't physically imposing when he arrived. And he isn't physically imposing now. He has gained "25 to 30 pounds" at Nebraska, up to 285, and he would like to weigh about 290, he said. But first he would want to lose 10 pounds and build himself back up.

In addition to physical development, linemen seem to have a better grasp of the mental aspects of the game, according to Austin. "I'm not saying people back in the day were dumb," he said.

"I guess they just put more into the mental side of football (now)."

That's at least as important as physical ability. Offensive line play is complicated and requires time to learn. That Hickman has learned quickly helps explain his climb up the depth chart, that and his ability to move, to run. He's among the faster linemen, or at least "that's what they say," he said. "They put a lot of screens to my side (against Missouri), so it kind of seems that way."

Whether or not he has above-average speed, though, "I don't know if I do," he said.

Before the Missouri game, Austin told him to "keep it simple" and reminded him that what he was doing he had done in practice "so many times during the week that when you go out on the field, it's just execution. I told him the guys we play on a daily basis (in practice) get you well-prepared. Our defense gets you well-prepared for anybody that you're going to play, up front," said Austin.

A certain amount of nervousness is "inevitable," Austin said. "I'm nervous myself before every game. All I have to do is calm down. I told him to calm down and he was good.

"After the first series he calmed down and played ball."

Because of his playing in the spring, and during Alamo Bowl practices, "it doesn't really feel like I'm a freshman," Hickman said. "It feels like a redshirt freshman, maybe."

Even then the list of those who have preceded him in offensive line wouldn't be all that long. ■



Guard Jacob Hickman made his first start against Missouri.

Mike Babcock is a former sports columnist for the Lincoln Journal Star. He has covered Nebraska football for nearly 30 years. Mike can be reached at MBABCOCK1@neb.rr.com or P.O. Box 6782, Lincoln, NE 68506.

Rough Ride

Colorado's first-year head coach says he knew it wasn't going to be easy



Curt McKEEVER

YOU'D EXPECT HIM to be slumped over and lifeless, but Dan Hawkins maintained he was still tall in the saddle following Colorado's home loss to Kansas State on Nov. 4.

That result left the Buffaloes 1-9 on the season — a mark CU had stooped to only twice before in the program's 117-year history.

"I knew this was not going to be an easy rodeo when I got into it," the first-year coach Hawkins told reporters in Colorado. "I came in with my spurs on. I might be getting a little longer ride than I thought I was going to get, but I knew there was going to be some bucking going on."

A year earlier, Hawkins was riding a much tamer animal. In his fifth season at Boise State, he was on his way to steering the Broncos to a share of another Western Athletic Conference title.

But if Colorado finishes 1-11, something it's never done, Hawkins will have matched his five-season loss total at Boise in his first 12 games with the Buffs.

If one didn't know, they'd never guess he inherited a program that won four Big 12 Conference North Division titles in the previous five seasons.

"In college football, no matter who you are and where you play, every team is good, and things can change fast," linebacker Jordon Dizon told the Boulder Daily Camera. "Sometimes, all a team needs is a little motivation, and they can be top 10 in the nation when last season they were, you know, jack."

"We were on the other end of the spectrum last year, and now we're on this end. We just got to play for pride."

CU, a team with 24 seniors, played its final home game against Iowa State before having an extra week to prepare for Nebraska. Prior to the contest against the Cyclones, Hawkins was hoping his team could provide another example of a quick turnaround.

"Either way, if you get caught up too much in your successes or caught up too much in your defeats I think you're doing yourself a disservice," he said. "Unfortunately, like I told them, right now we're learning the extreme of one side of it."

Last year, prior to a November game against Iowa State, Colorado was sitting 7-2, and a contract offer to then-coach Gary Barnett was on the table. But the Buffs lost that game, then got beat by Nebraska and had to have the Cyclones lose their regular-season finale to back into the Big 12 championship.

CU got drilled 70-3 by Texas in the title contest, and Barnett would end up accepting a \$3 million buyout before the Buffs played and lost to Clemson in the Champs Sports Bowl.

The Hawkins era then began with a stunning loss to NCAA Division I-AA Montana State and would be followed by five more before Colorado beat Texas Tech.

The start has tested the patience of Buffalo fans, who watched Barnett go 7-5 and 3-8 in his first two seasons before delivering a Big 12 championship in his third year.

The crowd of 42,696 for the Kansas State game, which featured noticeable sections of Wildcat fans, was the smallest to see a conference game at Folsom Field since 1988. And CU officials acknowledged that they'd given away several thousand tickets.

Hawkins seemed to have a good handle on the situation.

"I mean, you kind of wait for the movie reviews, and you ask your buddy 'What was a good movie?' and you go," he said after noting many fans wait for a winner before showing up to watch.

Although he's directing a loser in his first season, Hawkins' battle cry following an Oct. 28 loss at Kansas was: "We're going to finish."

The next day, he then put his players through a heavier-than-normal routine of conditioning that included running the stadium steps of every section in the lower bowl.

"Maybe it's attitude reinforcement," Hawkins said. "I've been in this thing for awhile. I know what's going on. I know what's happening. I know what our ills are, and I know how to fix our ills."

Colorado's problems will get better when Hawkins gets the kind of players he needs to run his spread offense. After the Kansas State game, the Buffs ranked 117th out of 119 teams in passing offense, 107th in total offense and 108th in scoring.

And while CU's defense has been salty enough to give it a chance to win three low-scoring games (the Buffs also lost a 34-31 overtime decision to

Baylor), against Kansas State it allowed a season-high 439 yards. Freshman quarterback Josh Freeman, who in his previous road game was 5-for-19 passing, completed 22 of 26 throws for 251 yards and a pair of touchdowns.

"These guys have always fought," Hawkins said after the game. "They keep coming. Give them credit for that. They've never, ever given up."

Of course, that resiliency will have to survive two more games and a long off season.

"If you have a formula, if you have a plan that's been used many times before, and you understand that plan, then you can have a lot of confidence," Hawkins said. "And I do. It never happens as fast as you want it, but you know the things that have to exist and have to go on."

"I've done it, and many other guys have done it."

And so he'll keep saddling up until happier trails follow. ■

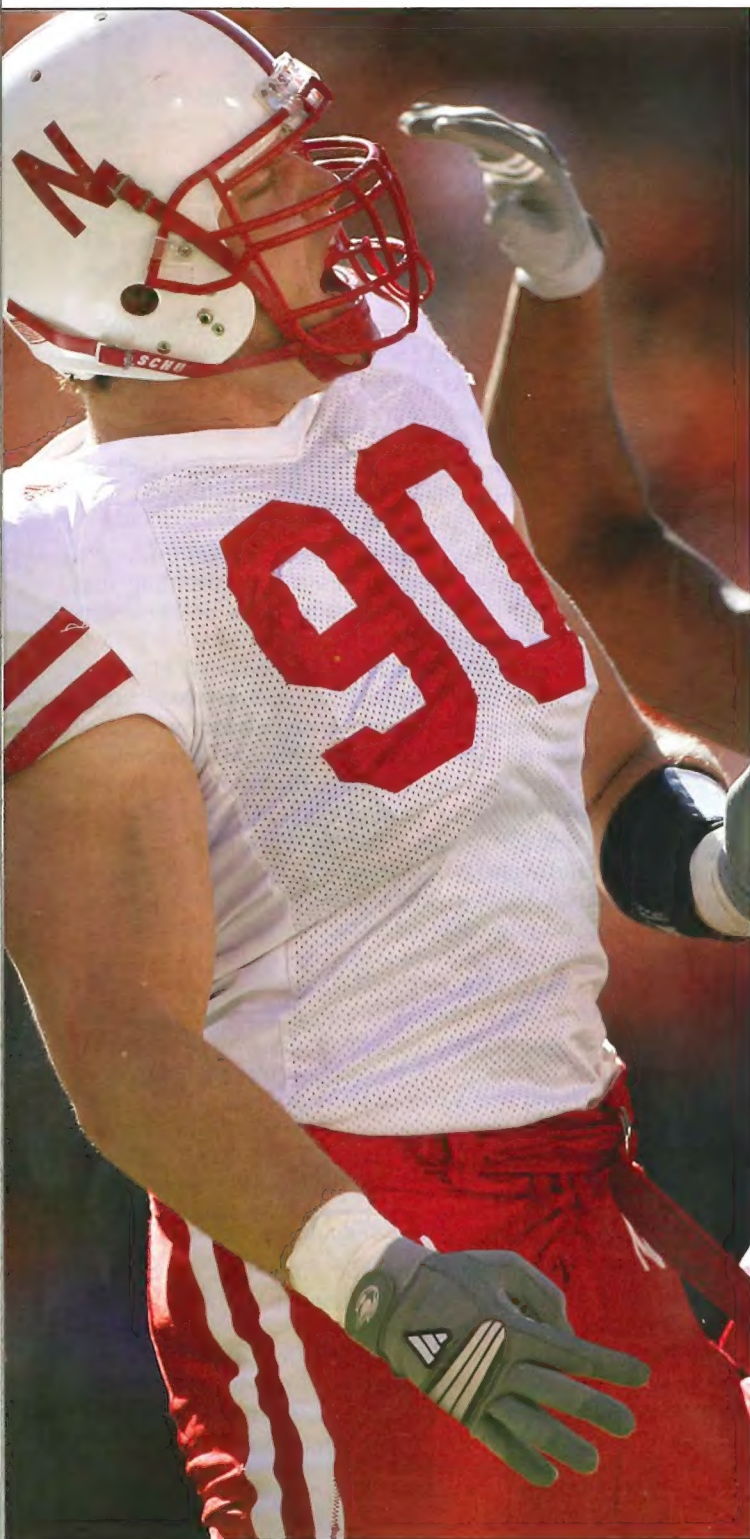


Dan Hawkins had a 53-11 record in five seasons at Boise State.

Curt McKeever is a sportswriter for the Lincoln Journal Star. In addition to reporting on football, he is the primary beat writer for baseball. Curt can be reached at cmckeever@journalstar.com

RECRUITING THROUGH THE YEARS

Humbling



***Early workout
gave Carriker
an idea of how
hard it would be***

By Mike Babcock

The newcomers were finishing strength and conditioning tests in Cook Pavilion after reporting for preseason practice in the late summer of 2002. The last task was the 300-yard shuttle run, 50 yards down and back, three times, then a 5-minute rest and another three times down and back.

Adam Carriker, one of 16 freshman scholarship recruits, had prepared during the summer. He had worked hard. But few, if any, understood the level of conditioning the tests required.

After the first 300-yard set, Carriker wasn't feeling all that well, so he sat down. With only 5 minutes to recover, however, he soon stood back up. By then, his head was spinning and, to be indelicate, he began to throw up in an aluminum garbage can strategically placed for such a purpose.

The next thing he knew he was sprawled on the turf, looking up at coach Frank Solich.

"Are you OK?" Solich wanted to know. Carriker managed to sit up and as he did so, he saw the garbage can, with a sizeable dent. He had passed out and fallen onto the can.

"Thank God, they didn't make me run it again," Carriker said recently, recalling the experience. In fact, the trainers loaded him on a cart and drove him from the Cook Pavilion.

Chad Wade, an assistant strength coach, still kids him about that day. But Carriker wasn't the first freshman to endure such an experience, and he certainly wasn't the last.

"I worked hard in high school but not quite as hard as they worked here," he said.

That reality is too much for some to handle, which explains, in part, why Carriker and five others among

After redshirting in 2002, Adam Carriker became a three-year starter at defensive end.

Experience



Nebraska's senior class, pictured before the season, included (front row, from left) Zack Bowman (14, who is expected to return after missing the season because of injury), Brandon Rigoni (24), Dane Todd (41), Will Otto (45); (middle row) Barry Cryer (94), Kurt Mann (50), Isaiah Fluellen (28), Andy Kadavy (47), Mark O'Shea (50), Stewart Bradley (34), Greg Austin (65), Adam Carriker (90), Jay Moore (44), Dontrell Moore (19, who is no longer with the team); (back row) Matt Herian (11), Lane Kelly (92), Newton Lingenfelter (74), Andrew Shanle (8), Ola Dagunduro (54) and Zac Taylor (13).

those 16 scholarship freshmen in 2002 who will be playing for the final time at Memorial Stadium when Nebraska finishes the regular-season against Colorado on the day after Thanksgiving.

Isaiah Fluellen, his senior season ended by injury, also will be introduced, and Mark LeFlore was introduced before the final home game last season because he played as a true freshman and never redshirted. But the others all left the team before exhausting their eligibility.

The reasons for leaving were varied, including injury, dismissal or

Eleventh in a Series

transfer. Fabian Washington left for the NFL following his junior season, as a first-round draft pick.

"It's hard to make it four or five years," said Carriker. "It's tough mentally to make it or not quit or get kicked off. It's really hard to make it. This isn't for everyone."

Jermaine Leslie probably would have made it if not for an injury.

Jay Moore, another of those who did make it, and Leslie were friends.

"He was traveling (with the varsity)," Moore said. "Then he breaks his ankle, and it just ruined him."

Leslie, an offensive lineman, was impressive, said Carriker. "He was one of the strongest guys when he came in — on the team not just the freshmen. He was a power-lifter."

Jemayel Phillips, nicknamed "Big Smooth," was another who impressed Carriker. "Those two guys stick out," Carriker said. Phillips was never really comfortable and eventually transferred.

"It's too bad he couldn't pan out," Moore said.



Scott Braun

Jay Moore, who played fullback and defensive end in high school, got the chance to show his running skills when he intercepted a pass against Iowa State in 2005.

Matt Herian was another who stuck out, Carriker recalled, but for a different reason. The two made recruiting visits to Nebraska at the same time, the weekend of the Southeastern Conference championship game between LSU and Tennessee. LSU's victory sent the Cornhuskers to the Rose Bowl.

Herian was less than impressive, Carriker said. "He looked so skinny. 'Why did they even offer this kid?' Then we got to camp, and he was making the Blackshirts look ridiculous."

Herian, among four freshmen who played in 2002, caught seven passes, four of them for touchdowns and averaged 43 yards per catch. "Obviously, I was way wrong," said Carriker.

He admits his initial assessment of Herian might have had something to do with his own situation. Nebraska's initial scholarship offer came with a stipulation. He would pay his own way first semester as a part-time student to preserve eligibility and go on scholarship second semester — grayshirt.

Nebraska committed two scholarships to in-state players who did

Recruiting list, 2002				
Player, Pos.	Ht.	Wt.	Hometown	Letters
Adam Carriker, RE	6-6	255	Kennewick, Wash.	2003-04-05
Curt Dukes, QB	6-0	205	Stony Point, N.C.	
Isaiah Fluellen, WR	6-1	175	Ramstein, Germany	2003-04-05
Brandon Greeson, DL	6-3	325	High Point, N.C.	
Matt Herian, TE	6-4	215	Pierce, Neb.	2002-03-04
David Horne, RB	6-0	190	Omaha, Neb.	2002-03-04
Mark LeFlore, WR	5-11	175	Omaha, Neb.	2002-03-04-05
Jermaine Leslie, OL	6-2	300	Weatherford, Texas	
Kurt Mann, OL	6-4	265	Grand Island, Neb.	2003-04-05
Grant Miller, FB-LB	6-1	215	Peabody, Mass.	2005
Jay Moore, RE	6-5	255	Elkhorn, Neb.	2004-05
Jemayel Phillips, OL	6-6	330	Winnfield, La.	
Andrew Shanle, DB	6-1	200	St. Edward	2003-04-05
Cory Timm, OL	6-5	295	Yutan, Neb.	
Dane Todd, FB	5-11	225	Lincoln, Neb.	2003-04-05
Fabian Washington, CB	6-0	175	Bradenton, Fla.	2002-03-04
*Demorrio Williams	6-2	200	Beckville, Texas	2002-03
*Junior college transfer				
State breakdown: Nebraska 7, North Carolina 2, Texas 2, Florida, Louisiana, Massachusetts, Washington, Germany				

grayshirt in 2002: Kade Pittman, a wide receiver from North Platte, and Trevor Neemann, a defensive end from Lincoln.

Stewart Bradley, one of a handful of 2002 walk-ons who have survived and thrived, came from Salt Lake City with the promise of a scholarship after that first year.

Carriker wasn't about to travel halfway across the country and pay

out-of-state tuition, even though he had grown up a Cornhusker fan in Kennewick, Wash. He had other choices, immediate scholarship offers from Washington State, Washington, Oregon State and Oregon, the only school he didn't visit.

A day or two after he made it clear he wouldn't grayshirt, Nebraska called back to offer a scholarship and ask if he wanted to visit. He under-

stood the reality of recruiting. "They've got to make sure they're getting the best," Carriker said. Even so, "I was a little bit hurt by that."

Seeing the skinny Herian added to the hurt. "I wasn't completely sure right away, but after I visited, this was definitely where I wanted to come," he said. "So I just kind of got over it."

Carriker and Moore roomed together as freshmen, on the top floor of the Harper Hall dormitory. The two "didn't really hang out that much, kind of did our own thing," said Moore.

At day's end, however, when they returned to the room, they commiserated with each other, about how difficult practicing on the scout team was. "It's a bear, getting beat up, being a guy who has to service the offense, knowing you're not going to get to play on Saturday," Moore said. Plus, the older players would "do everything they could to intimidate you, the 'freshman punk.'"

"We had one guy, if I saw him today, I'd tell him to 'go somewhere.'"

Tackle Dan Vili Waldrop, a junior in 2002, was among the exceptions.

"He'd pancake you and then help you up," said Carriker. "He was a nice guy."

Because of being so far from home — he arrived in July and didn't get home for a visit until after the Independence Bowl — and the trials and tribulations of scout-team duty, the first semester of his freshman year "was one of the toughest times of my life," Carriker said. "It was real hard."

Moore might have had a little easier time because he was from Elkhorn, Neb. He already knew some people, and he could get home on weekends. Even so, that first

semester was tough.

The change is dramatic from then to now. When Moore looks in a mirror he is reminded of how much he has changed. "My first year I wasn't mentally ready for it," he said.

"You think you're ready, but that first day of practice in pads, going against the varsity linemen, you realize, 'Wow, this is something different.' The pace of practice, the speed of the game, the tempo, it's definitely a shock. Sometimes it's like, 'What's going on?'"

Both expected to redshirt. Nebraska had experienced rush ends, including Chris Kelsay, Trevor Johnson, Benard Thomas, Demoiné Adams and Justin Smith, a senior with whom Carriker stayed until pre-season practice began and freshmen could move into the dorms.

Rush ends coach Nelson Barnes called Carriker into his office and asked about redshirting. "I wouldn't have really played," said Carriker. "So I wanted to redshirt."

Much has changed since they arrived at Nebraska. They've seen a dramatic restructuring of the program, among other things playing for two head coaches and three defensive coordinators. But as nearly every senior says, the time seems to have gone quickly now, after dragging that first semester.

Carriker remembers driving with his parents from Washington to Nebraska in the summer of 2002, stopping to visit grandparents in Montana and Nebraska along the way. He remembers his parents dropping him off at Justin Smith's apartment and then driving away. It doesn't seem so long ago.

But he has gone through hundreds of practices since then.

"So it just depends on how I look at it," he said. ■

Bob Devaney, 1915-1997



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New Perspective

Christensen cherishes playing more than ever after sitting out season

By Terry Douglass

Andy Christensen is accustomed to excelling at nearly everything he does. For example, Christensen was a two-way starter for the final three years of his prep football career at Bennington High School, but his athletic prowess didn't end there. As a senior, he was also a state champion wrestler and won the Class C state shot put title by nearly seven feet.

Academically, Christensen was a member of the National Honor Society. His 4.1 GPA ranked in the top five percent of his class.

Christensen appeared to be on track to continue his excellence early in his college football career at Nebraska. After redshirting his true freshman season in 2004, Christensen was in the mix for a starting job on the Cornhuskers offense line in fall camp.

But just when it seemed like things couldn't get much better, a shoulder injury put Christensen's development on hold. Surgery was required, forcing the 6-foot-3, 300-pound sophomore into an unfamiliar and most unsatisfying role: bystander.

"It's definitely hard because there's nothing you can really do except cheer them on and give the team support," Christensen said. "You definitely feel like there's a little distance between you and your teammates because you're not able to go out there and help them out."

#62 ANDY CHRISTENSEN
SOPHOMORE GUARD

Looking back, Christensen said his injury — while certainly not something he'd want to experience again — helped him mature as both a person and a football player. It has definitely made getting back on the football field something he cherishes now more than ever.

"It's a great feeling to get back and be able to help our team and try to get us to where we need to be," Christensen said. "It was pretty difficult to stay on the sideline, knowing that you had an opportunity to play."

"Just the fact that I couldn't help the team at all was the most frustrating experience."

Christensen started this season as Nebraska's No. 2 left guard behind senior Greg Austin, but has seen plenty of playing time while spelling Austin and right guard Mike Huff. Christensen earned his first career start for the Huskers in a 21-3 win at Kansas State on Oct. 14 and got the starting call again for a 34-20 victory over Missouri on Nov. 4.

"I don't ever want to see anybody get hurt, but I just went in there and did what I had to do," Christensen said. "We're going to get Greg back, and he'll be playing again at the end of the season."

Although the Kansas State game marked his first start, Christensen said nerves weren't really even a factor.

"Even though I wasn't starting, I had gotten to play quite a bit at left and right guard in about all the previous



Scott Bruhn

son."

games," Christensen said. "I had plenty of experience, so I just treated it like any other game, got fired up and went out there and did my best."

Against Missouri, Christensen helped the Huskers accumulate 419 yards of total offense. More importantly, said Nebraska coach Bill Callahan, the line didn't give up a sack against a Tigers' defense that entered the game ranked 12th in the country with an average of 3.2 sacks per game.

"In a huge game like this, they responded favorably, so we're really proud of their efforts," Callahan said of the Nebraska offensive line. "We kept them sackless, which I thought was big. We didn't want them to start having a blitz-fest against our protection."

Teammate Jacob Hickman, who earned his first career start against Missouri at the right guard spot, said Christensen normally isn't one to get too worked up about anything — even starting a Big 12 Conference football game.

"He's a real calm, real focused guy," Hickman said. "He does well on his pulls and everything and is a player who always does his job. Andy's really good at zoning in and just doing what he has to do."

Christensen said that's pretty much always been his approach to athletics.

"I'm pretty even-keeled," Christensen said. "I don't get too excited or too down on myself when things happen. I just try to go out there, execute my assignment and let everybody else do theirs."

Not that Christensen doesn't have a playful side.

"Andy's the kind of guy who's real, real quiet and just kind of sits there and then, out of nowhere, he'll come up and just hit me in the arm or something," Hickman said. "The first couple of times, I was surprised. Andy's actually a real friendly guy, a real good guy who kind of stays in the background — a funny guy — who just comes at you out of nowhere."

That touch of orneriness that Christensen seems to possess translates well into what he likes to do on the field. It's probably safe to say that there isn't anyone who has enjoyed the way Nebraska's offense has

emphasized the running game this year more than Christensen.

"I love running the ball," Christensen said. "That's what I grew up doing, and I still love doing it here."

"When you run the ball, you can run at people full speed and make decisions and knock somebody out if you get an opportunity to. It allows you to play more aggressively."

Growing up a Husker fan, Christensen's lifelong goal was to continue Nebraska's tradition of playing a physical brand of football. With the coaching change prior to the 2004 season, Christensen said he was elated to hear offensive line coach

Dennis Wagner say that there was still room for smash-mouth football in the framework of the West Coast offense.

"I pretty much knew from the get-go that this was where I wanted to go," Christensen said. "Every Nebraska kid dreams of coming here, and I just knew that's what I was going to do."

"(When the coaching change was made), it didn't really matter to me. I was happy that they kept recruiting all the guys that they did. We had a pretty good class that year. Things just worked out." ■

Terry Douglass is the sports editor of the *Grand Island (Neb.) Independent*. He can be reached at terry.douglass@charter.net.



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10 QUESTIONS

with
BRANDON JOHNSON

6-3/315 Jr. Defensive Tackle
Chicago, Ill.

When Brandon Johnson went to Compton (Calif.) Community College, after starting as a freshman at Graceland University in Lamoni, Iowa, he was greeted with looks of familiarity. "Everybody was like, Man, there was a dude who just left who looked like you. His name was Ola," Johnson said.

Ola Dagunduro played two seasons at Compton before transferring to Nebraska. "I'm like, 'He doesn't look like me, man. I don't look like him,'" said Johnson.

He met Dagunduro on his recruiting trip to Nebraska, however, and changed his mind.

"I'm walking down the hall, and they're coming up to me, and I'm like, 'Oh, my God, he does look like me,'" Johnson said. "It even fooled my mother. She saw a picture of him and said, 'They've got you in a Nebraska helmet already?' And I'm like, 'No, Mom, that's not me.' We call ourselves twins."

Johnson also plays defensive tackle. But he got off to a slow start, missing all of training camp. He has played on the field goal team in recent games. It has been frustrating, but with encouragement from defensive line coach John Blake, "it just keeps getting better and better," he said.

"I'm just taking it day by day, sucking it all up, enjoying life, man."

What's the best thing served at the training table?

"I love the baked catfish. But James (Harris) doesn't think I eat healthy. They probably serve it two or three times a week. I have it every time, put the lemon on there, a little hot sauce and tear away."

If somebody from Chicago visited you in Lincoln, what would you show them?

"I'd have to show them the stadium, by far. I mean, when my mom came down, after the game, I gave her a tour of everything. It's like closing time, and I'm like, 'Mom, come see this.' I showed my little brother the locker room, and that amazed him. The stadium, hands down."

What scares you most: spiders, snakes or sharks?

"Snakes, I don't like snakes at all, no snakes."

If you could compete in any collegiate sport other than football, what would it be?

"Basketball. I played basketball in high school, all four years. I was a power forward. I was pretty good. I could dunk. A lot of people on the team don't believe I can dunk, so I'm going to have to show 'em after the season. The big boy got 'boings.'" I like to rebound, box out, use my big body."

When you cook for yourself, what's your specialty?

"I like to make baked chicken. Without the right amount of seasoning, the chicken doesn't taste good. I put some Lawry's in there, black pepper, lemon pepper . . . I can't tell my recipe."



Scott Brubaker

If you could spend 30 minutes with any celebrity, who would you pick and what would you ask?

"I would love to spend time with Julius Peppers. I would want to get to know him, his struggles trying to get to the NFL, how he made it and what motivated him. He's just an incredible athlete. I love Michael Jordan, but I met him, and I met Jay-Z. Michael Jordan was principal for a day at my high school. And we won a radio contest, and Jay-Z came to our high school. So I was lucky to meet both of them, two of my favorite people of all time. I actually got to shake their hand and take a picture. Jay-Z, I asked him about his chain, and he let me put it on in front of the whole school. It was real cool."

If your life were made into a movie, who would you pick to play you?

"Anthony Anderson, he's a funny guy. He's a big guy. He would fit my role, with the football."

If you were given \$100,000 and couldn't save it, how would you spend it?

"It would go to my high school football team, Coach (William) Gray. He just took over the head coaching job. He was an assistant when I was there. I would call him and say, 'Coach, I've got \$100,000 for you.' And he'd be glad to take it off my hands. They give a lot of kids a chance. Because of the gangs, they want to get the kids off the streets. They give them a chance to make something out of their lives."

What was the biggest adjustment, coming to Lincoln?

"It wasn't really a big adjustment for me because I've been in a small town in Iowa for a year, way smaller than this. It's just not as fast as Chicago. Everybody's on the go. Everybody in California is on the go, too. It's just much slower here. The people are much nicer. They kind of look out for you, lend a helping hand. You don't have to have your guard up all the time like in Compton. It's more relaxed."

If your teammates came to Chicago for a visit, what would you show them?

"Oh man, they won't want to leave. I'm going to take them downtown, show them the Sears Tower. They're going to be like, 'Wow.' And then we'll get us some famous Chicago Popcorn, buttered popcorn and caramel mixed, and probably hit a club. I've got a few places. They'll love it." ■



Nebraska 28
Texas A&M 27

Nebraska defensive end Barry Turner (99) sacks Texas A&M quarterback Stephen McGee for a 10-yard loss in the second quarter. Turner was credited with 1.5 sacks and blocked a field goal with 1:57 remaining to set the stage for the Huskers' winning drive. (Photo by Scott Bruhn)

Redemp

Winning catch makes up for 'worst' game

By Mike Babcock

Photos: Scott Bruhn

A man in the group of jubilant Nebraska fans through whom the team exited at the southeast corner of Kyle Field raised a hand to show gray gloves. They were Maurice Purify's he told a friend, also in the group, secured as Purify headed to the locker room. "Right here," the man said, displaying them.

If they were, indeed, Purify's gloves, they had just pulled in a Zac Taylor pass with 21 seconds remaining to give the Cornhuskers a 28-27 victory against Texas A&M.

Taylor lofted the ball and Purify wrapped his hands around it in the north end zone. "I just told Coach, 'Let's throw it up to Purify,'" said Taylor. "And 'Mo' went up and made a play."

The play was a form of redemption, according to Purify, who caught one other pass but "dropped a couple of balls I should have caught," the junior wide receiver said.

As a result, the performance was "probably the worst" in his brief Cornhusker career.

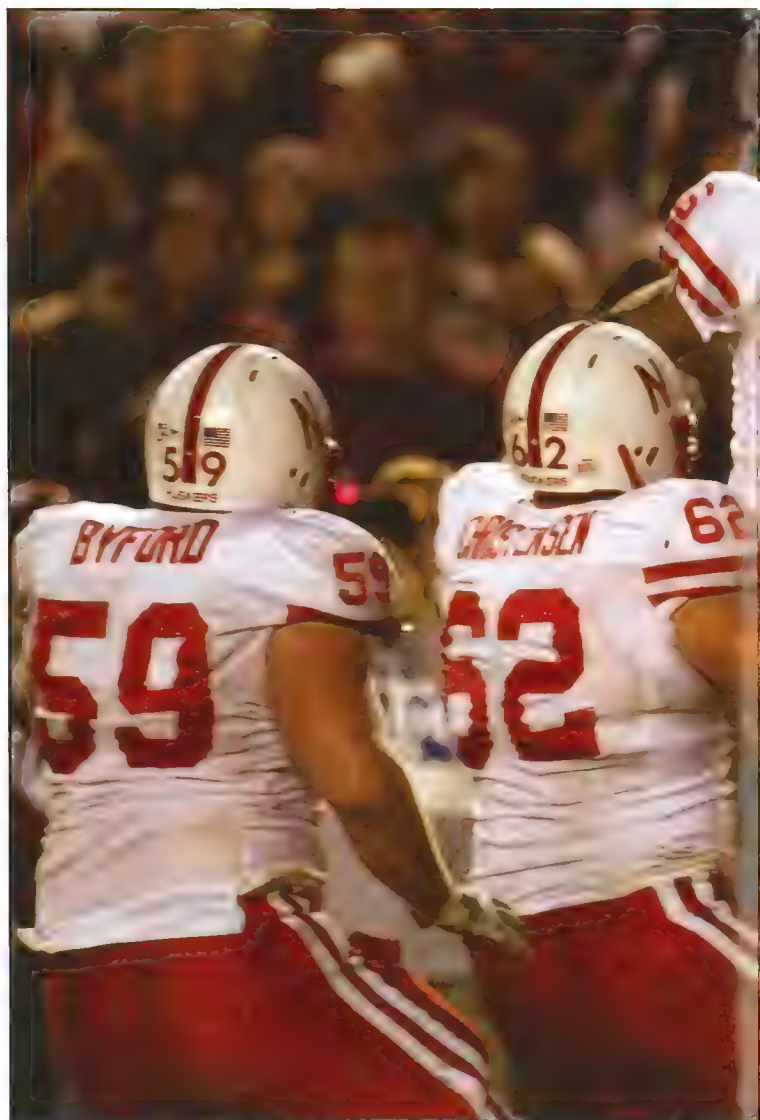
"I was a little frustrated — yeah, my worst game."

No one on the Nebraska sideline would have agreed, or cared really. The 6-foot-4, 210-pound Purify was the man of the hour, the receiver in whose direction most of a crowd of 83,336 were looking, or should have been anyway, in such a situation. "When you're down there on the 10- or 15-yard line, it's an automatic mismatch," Taylor said. "When you're in 'four-wide' you can't really help."

"The other team just has to hope their corner can jump with him. I'm pretty sure no one can do that. I try to hang onto it (the ball) for an extra second, let him get down there and get himself situated. With 'Mo,' you just throw it up, let him get set and try to out-jump somebody."

Purify was matched against Jordan Peterson, a 5-10, 186-pound redshirted freshman.

The touchdown pass capped an 11-play, 75-yard drive that gives the Cornhuskers the Big 12 North Division title and sends them to the Big 12 championship game at Arrowhead Stadium in Kansas City on Dec. 2. The game could be a rematch against Texas. But Kansas State upset the Longhorns at Manhattan, Kan., 45-42 and must now defeat Texas A&M to ensure a trip to Kansas City.



Wide receiver Maurice Purify (16) celebrates with teammates Brett Byford (59), Andy Christensen (62) and Todd Peterson (17).

WORTH ANOTHER LOOK

A Texas loss coupled with Oklahoma victories against Baylor and Oklahoma State would send the Sooners to the championship game. Regardless of the opponent, the opportunity is "huge," said Callahan.

Nebraska hasn't played for the Big 12 championship since 1999.

"I'm just so elated for our football team and our staff, the three years we've been here, trying to get to this point. I can't credit these guys enough," Callahan said. "These kids, I wish you could have seen their faces in the locker room. They've poured a lot of effort and time and sweat

otion



and tears into this."

The touchdown pass was "kind of a red zone desperation play, beautifully, beautifully thrown, excellent location and just an excellent play, an outstanding play by Purify," said Callahan.

Purify, who also played basketball at San Francisco City College, used a kind of "box out" on Peterson. "I had to stop and get in front of the guy, go up and make the catch," he said.

When he saw the ball coming his way, "I just thought about the bad game I was having and (that) I've got to make it up," said Purify, who has caught a team-high seven touchdown passes.

He was asked if the touchdown made up for the dropped passes.

"A little bit," he said, "a little bit." ■

REPORT CARD

RUSHING OFFENSE

The running game was serviceable but certainly not spectacular. The Cornhuskers averaged only 3.2 yards per carry, but all four members of the I-back committee had an opportunity carry the ball. Cody Glenn, who didn't play against Missouri and got only one carry against Oklahoma State, ran for two touchdowns. Marlon Lucky was the leading rusher. ★★★

PASSING OFFENSE

Despite what could have been a critical interception — only the fourth of the season — Callahan couldn't have asked for anything more from Taylor than the game-winning touchdown drive he directed and capped with a pass to wide receiver Maurice Purify. ★★★★★

RUSHING DEFENSE

Texas A&M averaged 5.7 yards per carry, an average distorted some by a pair of big plays, a 53-yard run by Mike Goodson and a 57-yard touchdown run by quarterback Stephen McGee. But the Blackshirts made the stop when they needed to. ★★★

PASSING DEFENSE

Nebraska gave up yardage through the air, including 44 on a pass thrown by 6-foot, 274-pound running back Jorvorskie Lane. If he hadn't underthrown the ball, it probably wouldn't have been a completion. But again, the bottom line was results. ★★★

SPECIAL TEAMS

One play, a blocked field goal, was worth a perfect score. "Boy, special teams are such a big part of the game," Callahan said. "We practice that every day. We practice it live. And we practice it full-speed. It meant everything to ignite our offense." ★★★★★

NUMBERS

Nebraska works on its 2-minute offense in practice every Thursday. "We put a lot of emphasis on it," said coach Bill Callahan. "You've got to give credit to Zac Taylor, our offensive line and receivers. They all did an excellent job." To be exact, Taylor had 1 minute and 57 seconds to get the job done.

2

NEBRASKA-TEXAS A&M NOTES

FIRST UP

Nebraska scored first for the 10th time in 11 games this season, driving 66 yards on 11 plays on its second possession. The Cornhuskers would add two more touchdowns before the intermission and take a 21-10 lead to the locker room. They were held scoreless until 21 seconds remained in the game.

Their second-half problems were a result, in part, of poor field position, according to coach Bill Callahan. "We never got out of the hole, which is a tough challenge on the road," he said.

"No excuse, we just didn't execute well enough to get out of that hole."

GOOD BYE

The Cornhuskers don't play now until Nov. 24, when they finish the regular season against Colorado at Memorial Stadium. The Buffaloes defeated Iowa State, 33-16.

"We need the rest," said Callahan. "We've been after this 11 straight weeks in a row. By God, we need a bye. We need a little time to get freshened up . . . try to regenerate ourselves."

DUH

Texas A&M cornerback Jordan Peterson had to deal with Maurice Purify twice in the closing seconds. On the down before the winning touchdown pass, Cornhusker quarterback Zac Taylor tried to get the ball to Purify on the same route. "The first one, I was in good position," said Peterson. "The second one, he just executed. He's 6-4 and I'm 5-10. That's pretty much why they ran that play.

"He's a real big, physical receiver, you know."

NOT SO FAST MY FRIEND

Nebraska senior defensive tackle Barry Cryer anticipates a rematch with Texas in the Big 12 championship game. "That's been our goal. That's our whole goal since January," he said. "We're going to really come to play. Texas, we feel we're going to win." Texas will come to play IF it defeats Texas A&M at Austin on Nov. 24, the same day the Cornhuskers play Colorado. The Longhorns also could get to Kansas City, even if they lose, if Baylor or Oklahoma State were to beat Oklahoma.

CRYER'S CONFIDENCE

Cryer never doubted that Taylor's final pass would be complete. "I knew it was a touchdown when it left Zac's hand," he said. "I felt like it was going in slow motion."

He was on the sideline, of course, "up front, cheering them on, trying to get them all motivated, get everybody to hold hands because we're a family; we're a team."

ONE AT A TIME

Taylor isn't thinking about a potential rematch against Texas. "We've got Colorado first. That's going to be a tough game," he said. "This is their bowl game. They don't like us very much.

"If get past that, then we'll worry about Texas." Or Oklahoma.

FRUSTRATION

Texas A&M's three losses this season have come by a total of six points. The Aggies lost their previous game, also at home, 17-16 against Oklahoma. Their other home loss came against Texas Tech, 31-27, when the Red Raiders scored on a 37-yard touchdown pass with 26 seconds remaining.

TRAVEL ROSTER

The Cornhusker travel roster included 73 players, with the Big 12's once-a-season exception.

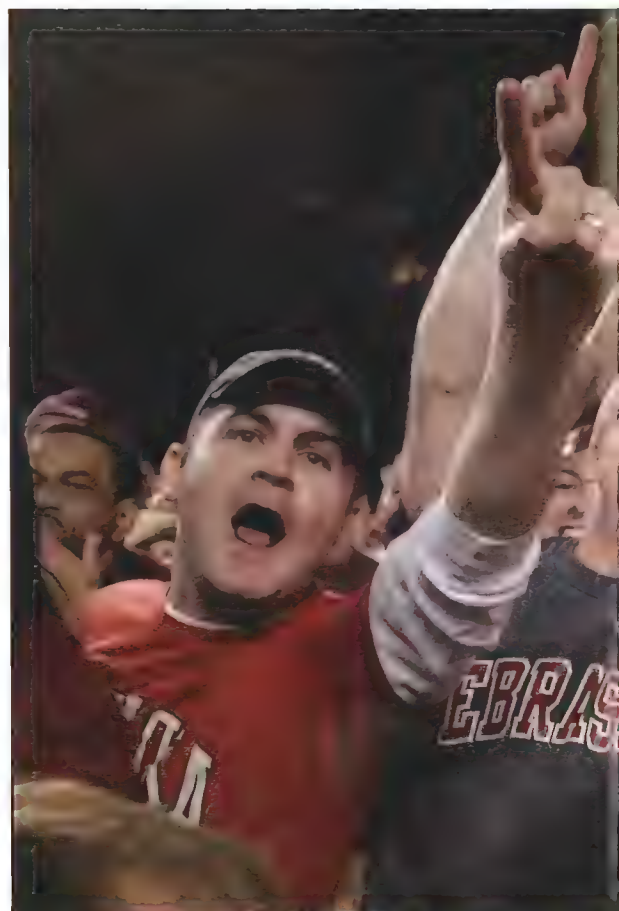
OFFENSE — Greg Austin, OL; Brett Byford, OL; Wes Cammack, WR; Andy Christensen, OL; Beau Davis, QB; Dan Erickson, WR; Joe Ganz, QB; Cody Glenn, IB; Victory Haines, OL; Frantz Hardy, WR; Matt Herian, TE; Jacob Hickman, OL; Sean Hill, TE; Menelik Holt, WR; Mike Huff, OL; Brandon Jackson, IB; Marlon Lucky, IB; Kurt Mann, C; Josh Mueller, TE; Lydon Murtha, OL; Carl Nicks, OL; Terrence Nunn, WR; Chris Patrick, OL; Todd Peterson, WR; J.B. Phillips, TE; Maurice Purify, WR; Matt Senske, FB; Matt Slauson, OL; Nate Swift, WR; Zac Taylor, QB; Hunter Teafatiller, TE; Dane Todd, FB; Kenny Wilson, IB.

DEFENSE — Stewart Bradley, LB; Lance Brandenburgh, LB; Titus Brothers, DB; Adam Carriker, DE; Barry Cryer, DL; Major Culbert, DB; Ola Dagunduro, DL; Ben Eisenhart, DB; Tierre Green, S; Courtney Grixby, CB; Brandon Johnson, DL; Andre Jones, CB; Andy Kadavy, LB; Kevin Luhrs, DL; Corey McKeon, LB; Jay Moore, DE; Steve Octavien, LB; Matt O'Hanlon, DB; Zach Potter, DE; Andy Poulosky, DE; Brandon Rigoni, DB; Bo Ruud, LB; Andrew Shanle, S; Clayton Sievers, LB; Tyrell Spain, CB; Ty Steinkuhler, DL; Ndamukong Suh, DL; Tony Sullivan, DE; Rickey Thenarse, DB; Barry Turner, DE; Anthony West, CB; Bryan Wilson, CB; Tyler Wortman, LB; Corey Young, DB.

KICKING — Jordan Congdon, PK; Nathan McBride, LS; T.J. O'Leary, LS; Michael Such, P; Dan Titchener, P; Jake Wesch, PK. ■



Nebraska's dramatic scoring drive in the final minutes led to comeback overcame a 27-21 deficit to win 28-27 and clinch a spot in the D





celebrations on the sidelines (above) and in the stands (below), as the Huskers won the 2002 Big 12 Championship game in Kansas City.



Who Stood Out?

OFFENSE

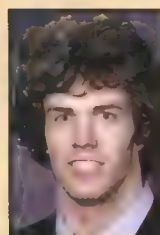
Quarterback Zac Taylor was the man of the hour, of course. "Zac is so poised. He's always the same guy," said sophomore wide receiver Todd Peterson. "He's always supportive. He never gets angry. He's rock steady." Taylor set the school single-season record for touchdown passes and career record for passing yardage on the same play, a 4-yard touchdown pass to Peterson with 11 minutes remaining in the second quarter. At that point, it appeared the Cornhuskers had control. Not so.



Zac Taylor

DEFENSE

Senior strongside linebacker Stewart Bradley was credited with a team-high seven tackles. Junior weakside linebacker Bo Ruud had six tackles (one of five Cornhuskers with six), none more important than shoving the Aggies' Mike Goodson out of bounds after a 53-yard run to save a touchdown. A&M had to settle for a 20-yard Layne Neumann field goal to cut the deficit to 20-13.



Stewart Bradley

SPECIAL TEAMS

Sophomore defensive end Barry Turner blocked Neumann's 42-yard field goal attempt with 1:57 remaining to set up the winning drive. Turner "got it clean," said defensive tackle Barry Cryer. Before the play, "I told him, 'Man, I'm going to give you everything I got.' And he was like, 'I'm going to give you everything I got.' He pushed me through there and blocked it." Turner also was credited with 1.5 sacks, his first sacks of the season, after being credited with six for 46 yards in losses last season.



Barry Turner

INJURY REPORT

Wide receiver Nate Swift was helped from the field with 1:12 remaining in the first quarter and didn't return, although he was "up and down the sideline," exhorting his teammates, said Todd Peterson, also a wide receiver. Offensive tackle Matt Slauson limped off the field with 4:29 remaining in the third quarter. In addition, Taylor "took some hellacious hits," Callahan said. "I think we're going to need a little time to heal up after this game. A lot of guys got banged up."

GAME STATS

SCORING

Nov. 11, 2006

Kyle Field College Station, Texas

Attendance 83,336

	1	2	3	4	F
Nebraska	7	14	0	7	28
Texas A&M	7	3	3	14	27

First Quarter

	NU	TA
NU Glenn 2-yard Run (Congdon Kick) 05:58 Drive: 11 plays 66 yds 4:02	7	0

A&M Goodson 22-yard Run (Neumann Kick) 03:42 Drive: 4 plays 80 yds 2:16	7	7
---	---	---

Second Quarter

NU Glenn 6-yard Run (Congdon Kick) 14:54 Drive: 9 plays 52 yds 3:48	14	7
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NU Peterson Pass from Taylor 4-yards (Congdon Kick) 11:00 Drive: 4 plays 54 yds 1:08	21	7
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A&M Neumann 37-yard Field Goal 00:16 Drive: 8 plays 37 yds 2:40	21	10
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Third Quarter

A&M Neumann 20-yard Field Goal 00:16 Drive: 7 plays 61 yds 3:01	21	13
--	----	----

Fourth Quarter

A&M McGee 57-yard Run (McGee Rush Fail) 12:51 Drive: 3 plays 58 yds 1:11	21	19
--	----	----

A&M Lane 1-yard Run (Bennett Pass Good) 07:28 Drive: 6 plays 85 yds 2:29	21	27
--	----	----

NU Purify Pass from Taylor 9-yards (Congdon Kick) 00:21 Drive: 11 plays 75 yds 1:36	28	27
---	----	----

TEAM STATS

	NU	TA
Total First Downs	19	13
Rushing	6	4
Passing	12	9
Penalty	1	0
Rushing Attempts	38	27
Yards Gained Rushing	149	181
Yards Lost Rushing	26	26
Net Yards Rushing	123	155
Net Yards Passing	267	288
Passes Attempted	36	32
Passes Completed	21	19
Had Intercepted	1	0
Percent Completion	58.3%	59.4%
Yards per Attempt	7.4	9.0
Yards per Completion	12.7	15.2
Total Offensive Plays	74	59
Total Net Yards	390	443
Avg. Gain Per Play	5.3	7.5
Fumbles: No-Lost	0-0	0-0
Penalties: No-Yards	5-43	4-38
Punts: No-Yards	6-248	5-223
Avg. Per Punt	41.3	44.6
Avg. Net Punt	38.8	43.4
Punt Returns: No-Yards	2-6	3-15
Kickoff Returns: No-Yards	2-42	2-36
Interception Returns: No-Yards	0-0	1-16
Fumble Returns: No-Yards	0-0	0-0
Miscellaneous Yards	0	0
Possession Time	32:52	27:08
Third-Down Conversions	7-15	5-14
Percentage	46.7%	35.7%
Fourth-Down Conversions	1-2	0-1
Percentage	50.0%	0.0%
Sacks By: No-Yards	3-14	4-21



Nebraska quarterback Zac Taylor looks for a receiver. The senior completed 21-of-35 for 267 yards and two touchdowns.

INDIVIDUAL STATISTICS

NEBRASKA

	No	Gain	Lost	Net	Avg	TD	Lg
Lucky	12	53	1	52	4.3	0	15
Jackson	9	44	0	44	4.9	0	17
Glenn	6	25	0	25	4.2	2	8
Wilson	2	10	2	8	4.0	0	10
Team	1	0	2	-2	-2.0	0	0
Taylor	8	17	21	-4	-0.5	0	6
Total	38	149	26	123	3.2	2	17

	Att	Comp	%	Int	Yds	TD	Lg
Taylor	35	21	60.0	1	267	2	42
Team	1	0	0.0	0	0	0	0
Total	36	21	58.3	1	267	2	42

	No	Yds	TD	Lg
Peterson	7	82	1	22
Lucky	4	56	0	42
Purify	2	30	1	21
Nunn	3	28	0	12
Hardy	1	26	0	26
Swift	1	17	0	17
Erickson	1	16	0	16
Jackson	2	12	0	7
Total	21	267	2	42

	No	Yds	TD	Lg
Grixby	2	6	0	4
Total	2	6	0	4

	No	Yds	TD	Lg
Lucky	1	28	0	28
Jackson	1	14	0	14
Total	2	42	0	28

	No	Avg	Lg	Blk	TB	FC	50+	In	20
Titchener	6	41.3	47	0	0	1	0	1	1
Total	6	41.3	47	0	0	1	0	1	1

	Solo	Asst	Tot	TFL	Sack	PD	FF	FR
Bradley	3	4	7	0.5-1	0-0	0	0	0
Carriker	1	5	6	1.5-3	1-1	0	0	0
Grixby	3	3	6	1.5-3	0-0	1	0	0
McKeon	0	6	6	1-3	0-0	0	0	0
Ruud	3	3	6	0-0	0-0	1	0	0
Shanle	2	4	6	0-0	0-0	1	0	0
Brandenburg	1	4	5	0-0	0-0	0	0	0
Green	2	2	4	0-0	0-0	1	0	0
Jones	3	1	4	0-0	0-0	1	0	0
Moore	1	2	3	0.5-1	0-0	0	0	0
Turner	2	1	3	1.5-11	1.5-11	0	0	0
Dagunduro	0	2	2	0.5-2	0-0	0	0	0
Octavien	2	0	2	1-3	0-0	1	0	0
Rigon	1	1	2	0-0	0-0	0	0	0
Eisenhart	1	0	1	0-0	0-0	0	0	0
Huff	1	0	1	0-0	0-0	0	0	0
Kadavy	1	0	1	0-0	0-0	0	0	0
Peterson	0	1	1	0-0	0-0	0	0	0
Potter	0	1	1	0-0	0-0	0	0	0
Sievers	1	0	1	0-0	0-0	0	0	0
Steinkuhler	0	1	1	0-0	0-0	0	0	0
Suh	0	1	1	0-0	0-0	0	0	0

TEXAS A&M

	No	Gain	Lost	Net	Avg	TD	Lg
Goodson	11	92	12	80	7.3	1	53
McGee	8	72	14	58	7.2	1	57
Lane	6	13	0	13	2.2	1	5
Alexander	2	4	0	4	2.0	0	3
Total	27	181	26	155	5.7	3	57

	Att	Comp	%	Int	Yds	TD	Lg
McGee	31	18	58.1	0	244	0	47
Lane	1	1	100.0	0	44	0	44
Total	32	19	59.4	0	288	0	47

	No	Yds	TD	Lg
Bennett	6	67	0	25
Schroeder	2	52	0	44
Franks	2	46	0	47
Riley	2	39	0	33
Goodson	2	34	0	19
Alexander	2	20	0	13
Brown	2	18	0	9
Taylor	1	12	0	12
Total	19	288	0	47

	No	Yds	TD	Lg
Schroeder	3	15	0	8
Total	3	15	0	8

	No	Yds	TD	Lg
Franks	2	36	0	21
Total	2	36	0	21

	No	Avg	Lg	Blk	TB	FC	50+	In	20
Brantly	4	47.5	57	0	1	0	2	1	1
McGee	1	33.0	33	0	0	0	0	1	1
Total	5	44.6	57	0	1	0	2	2	2

	Made	Att	Lg	Blkd
Neumann	2	3	37	1
Total	2	3	37	1

	Solo	Asst	Tot	TFL	Sack	PD	FF	FR
Dodge	1	16	17	0.5-0	0-0	0	0	0
Newton	3	9	12	0-0	0-0	1	0	0
Warren	2	9	11	1.5-11	1-10	0	0	0
Bullitt	2	8	10	0-0	0-0	0	0	0
Gorrier	1	6	7	0-0	0-0	0	0	0
Gregg	1	5	6	0-0	0-0	0	0	0
Thornton	0	6	6	0-0	0-0	0	0	0
Reed	0	5	5	0-0	0-0	0	0	0
Bennett	2	2	4	2-8	1-6	0	0	0
Harrington	1	3	4	0-0	0-0	0	0	0
Obiozor	0	3	3	0-0	0-0	0	0	0
Smith	1	2	3	0-0	0-0	0	0	0
Heard	2	0	2	2-5	2-5	0	0	0
Peterson	0	2	2	0-0	0-0	4	0	0

	No	Yds	TD	Lg
Dodge	1	16	0	16
Total	1	16	0	16

2006 SEASON STATS

RUSHING

	G	No	Gain	Lost	Net	Avg	TD	Lg	Yd/G
Jackson, Brandon	11	134	764	25	739	5.5	6	48	67.2
Lucky, Marlon	11	112	645	26	619	5.5	6	51	56.3
Glenn, Cody	9	71	375	5	370	5.2	8	36	41.1
Wilson, Kenny	10	71	338	17	321	4.5	3	30	32.1
Nunn, Terrence	11	3	21	0	21	7.0	0	18	1.9
Hardy, Frantz	11	3	16	2	14	4.7	0	13	1.3
Ganz, Joe	3	2	10	12	-2	-1.0	0	10	-0.7
Taylor, Zac	11	47	110	164	-54	-1.1	1	24	-4.9

PASSING

	G	Att	Comp	% Int	Yds	TD	Lg	YD/G
Taylor, Zac	11	287	177	61.7	4	2540	22	78 230.9
Ganz, Joe	3	12	6	50.0	0	93	2	31 31.0
Purify, Maurice	11	1	1	100.0	0	28	1	28 2.5
Titchener, Dan	11	1	1	100.0	0	28	0	28 2.5
Lucky, Marlon	11	1	1	100.0	0	25	1	25 2.3
Wesch, Jake	8	1	1	100.0	0	17	1	17 2.1

RECEIVING

	G	No	Yds	Avg	TD	Lg	Yd/G
Purify, Maurice	11	27	533	19.7	7	63	48.5
Nunn, Terrence	11	33	500	15.2	2	75	45.5
Hardy, Frantz	11	13	299	23.0	3	78	27.2
Swift, Nate	11	16	289	18.1	1	49	26.3
Lucky, Marlon	11	24	272	11.3	0	42	24.7
Jackson, Brandon	11	20	249	12.4	1	49	22.6
Peterson, Todd	11	17	235	13.8	2	31	21.4
Herian, Matt	11	12	150	12.5	2	36	13.6
Phillips, J.B.	11	12	75	6.2	2	10	6.8
Teafatiller, Hunter	11	3	63	21.0	3	29	5.7
Erickson, Dan	11	2	23	11.5	0	16	2.1
Mueller, Josh	11	4	21	5.2	2	8	1.9
Senske, Matt	4	2	13	6.5	1	12	3.2
Todd, Dane	11	2	9	4.5	1	8	0.8

PUNT RETURNS LEADERS

	G	No	Yds	Avg	TD	Lg	Yd/G
Nunn, Terrence	11	18	153	8.5	0	31	13.9
Grixby, Cortney	11	8	66	8.2	0	16	6.0
Swift, Nate	11	3	50	16.7	0	33	4.5

KICKOFF RETURNS LEADERS

	G	No	Yds	Avg	TD	Lg	Yd/G
Jackson, Brandon	11	6	115	19.2	0	24	10.5
Lucky, Marlon	11	5	99	19.8	0	32	9.0
Green, Tierre	11	3	59	19.7	0	23	5.4
Hardy, Frantz	11	3	49	16.3	0	22	4.5
Wilson, Kenny	10	2	42	21.0	0	27	4.2

PUNTING

	G	No	Avg	Lg	Blk	FC	50+	In	20
Titchener, Dan	11	51	39.7	58	0	2	22	5	18

FIELD GOALS

	G	Att	Made	Lg	Blkd
Congdon, Jordan	11	7	5	40	0

DEFENSE LEADERS

	G	Tack	Ass	Tot	TFL	Sack	PD	FF	FR
Bradley, Stewart	11	34	30	64	2-12	0-0	1	2	3
Ruud, Bo	11	32	27	59	4-31	2-23	2	3	1
Green, Tierre	11	34	24	58	0-1	0-0	2	0	1
Jones, Andre	11	36	17	53	0-1	0-0	7	0	0
McKeon, Corey	10	22	27	49	2-9	0-0	2	1	1
Shanle, Andrew	11	35	14	49	0-0	0-0	3	0	1
Carriker, Adam	11	18	23	41	9-33	4-18	3	0	0
Grixby, Cortney	11	31	10	41	1-3	0-0	9	1	1
Brandenburg, L.	11	17	20	37	2-7	0-1	0	1	0
Moore, Jay	11	17	18	35	9-56	4-33	3	0	0

TEAM STATISTICS

	NU	OPP
Total First Downs	208	184
Rushing	96	66
Passing	102	109
Penalty	10	9
Total Net Yards	4350	3421
Total Plays	679	650
Yards Per Play	6.4	5.3
Yards Per Game	435.0	342.1
Rushing Attempts-Yards	411-1886	315-1202
Yards Per Attempt	4.6	3.8
Yards Per Game	188.6	120.2
Pass Att.-Comp.-Int.	268-166-3	335-179-11
Passing Yards	2464	2219
Yards Per Completion	14.8	12.4
Yards Per Game	246.4	221.9
Punting: No.-Avg.	45-39.5	57-39.9
Fumbles-Lost	19-12	27-11
Penalties-Yards	50-432	56-401
Sacks By-Yds. Lost	18-146	20-155
Third-Down Conversions	67-140	45-138
Conversion Pct.	47.9	32.6
Fourth-Down Conversions	9-13	9-20
Conversion Pct.	69.2	45.0
Avg. Time Of Possession	32:45	27:15

Scoring	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	OT	TOT
Nebraska	103	114	42	104	7	370
Opponents	17	76	29	82	0	204

2006 RESULTS, SCHEDULE

1	Sept. 2	Louisiana Tech (3-7), W 49-10	1-0
2	Sept. 9	Nicholls State (4-6), W 56-7	2-0
3	Sept. 16	@USC (8-1), L 28-10	2-1
4	Sept. 23	Troy (5-4), W 56-0	3-1
5	Sept. 30	Kansas (5-5), W 39-32 (OT)	4-1
6	Oct. 7	@Iowa State (3-8), W 28-14	5-1
7	Oct. 14	@Kansas State (7-4), W 21-3	6-1
8	Oct. 21	Texas (9-2), L 22-20	6-2
9	Oct. 28	@Oklahoma State (6-4), L 41-29	6-3
10	Nov. 4	Missouri (7-3), W 34-20	7-3
11	Nov. 11	@Texas A&M (8-3), W 28-27	8-3
12	Nov. 24	Colorado (2-9), 2:30 p.m., ABC	
13	Dec. 2	Big 12 Championship at Kansas City, Mo., 7 p.m., ABC	

SCOUTING REPORT

GAME 12

Colorado Nov. 24

Location: Boulder, Colo.

Enrollment: 27,624

2006 record: 2-9

Coach: Dan Hawkins, first year

Series: Nebraska leads 20-8-2

2:30 p.m. (CST), ABC
Memorial Stadium, Lincoln, Neb.

Quick Facts

Colorado entered its game against Iowa State with the worst scoring offense (14.9) in the Big 12, but scored on its first seven possessions in a 33-16 victory.

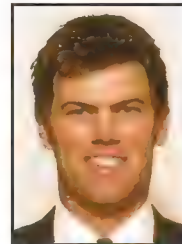
Now 2-9, the Buffaloes are trying to

avoid just the third 10-loss season in school history.

Junior quarterback Bernard Jackson had his first 200-yard passing game in the win over ISU and has gone back-to-back games without an interception for the first time as a starter.

Buff to Watch

Senior place-kicker **Mason Crosby** made four field goals against Iowa State to become the first Colorado player to eclipse the 300-point mark in his career. It was the fourth time he's kicked four in a game. Crosby, who is 19-of-27 this season and 66-of-87 for



his career, came up just short on a 65-yard try vs. ISU.

Big 12 At A Glance

	North Conf.		All		Saturday, Nov. 11	
Nebraska	5	2	8	3	Nebraska 28, Texas A&M 27	
Kansas State	4	3	7	4	Kansas State 45, Texas 42	
Missouri	3	3	7	3	Colorado 33, Iowa State 16	
Kansas	2	4	5	5	Oklahoma State 66, Baylor 24	
Colorado	2	5	2	9	Oklahoma 34, Texas Tech 24	
Iowa State	0	7	3	8		
	South		W		Saturday, Nov. 18	
Texas	6	1	9	2	Missouri at Iowa State	
Oklahoma	5	1	8	2	Kansas State at Kansas	
Texas A&M	4	3	8	3	Oklahoma at Baylor	
Oklahoma State	3	3	6	4	Oklahoma State at Texas Tech	
Texas Tech	3	4	6	5		
Baylor	3	4	4	7		
					Friday, Nov. 24	
					Colorado at Nebraska	
					Texas A&M at Texas	
					Saturday, No. 25	
					Oklahoma at Oklahoma State	
					Kansas at Missouri	

TENTATIVE 2-DEEPS

NEBRASKA OFFENSE

WRX	87	Nate Swift*	6-2	200	So.
	7	Frank Harco	6-1	200	Jr.
TE	84	Ende Pender*	6-4	290	Jr.
	16	Lydon Morton*	6-3	275	So.
LT	83	Andy Christensen	6-5	300	So.
	87	Jacob Hickman	6-4	290	Jr.
C	89	Scott Byford	6-3	310	Jr.
	80	Kurt Mann*	6-8	290	So.
RG	67	Mike Hurt*	6-4	300	So.
	88	Jacob Hickman	6-4	290	Jr.
RT	70	Matt Stanton*	6-8	325	So.
	77	Carl Nicka	6-8	325	Jr.
	13	Matt Henao***	6-8	242	Jr.
WRZ	85	Josh Mueller*	6-5	305	Jr.
	88	Terrence Nuno**	6-0	165	Jr.
LT	15	Todd Peterson*	6-4	270	So.
CB	23	Eric Taylor*	6-2	210	Jr.
	8	Joe Gans	6-1	200	So.
TE	41	Dana Todd***	6-11	185	Jr.
	42	Matt Senak	6-3	235	Jr.
FB	30	Brandon Jackson**	6-3	210	Jr.
	70	Marion Lucky*	6-0	210	So.
PK	75	Gregory Kunguza*	5-11	175	So.

NEBRASKA DEFENSE

DE	44	Jay Moore*	6-4	190	So.
	89	Berry Turner*	6-3	290	So.
LB	88	Cliff DeGondus	6-2	300	So.
	93	Ndamukong Rye	6-4	115	So.
RT	94	Barry Geyer*	6-5	290	So.
	43	Ty Steinkuhle*	6-5	290	So.
CB	80	Adam Cardona	6-0	190	Jr.
	85	Joel Futer*	6-3	190	So.
LB	34	Stewart Bradley***	6-3	145	Jr.
	88	Clayton Slevett*	6-3	140	So.
CB	53	Corey McKeon*	6-3	175	Jr.
	40	Lance Brandenbour*	6-1	210	Jr.
WRZ	51	Bo Ruud**	6-0	185	Jr.
	16	Steve Davidson	6-0	235	Jr.
LB	25	Andre Jones*	6-0	195	Jr.
	4	Hockey Thomas*	6-0	185	Jr.
FB	91	Terre Green**	6-1	200	Jr.
	6	Major Culbert*	6-0	200	Jr.
TE	8	Andrew Shook***	6-1	210	Jr.
	9	Bryan Wilson	6-1	200	Jr.
WRZ	4	Corey Gossy*	6-1	175	Jr.
	23	Corey Young	6-0	195	Jr.
PK	97	Dan Titchener	6-0	200	So.

COLORADO OFFENSE

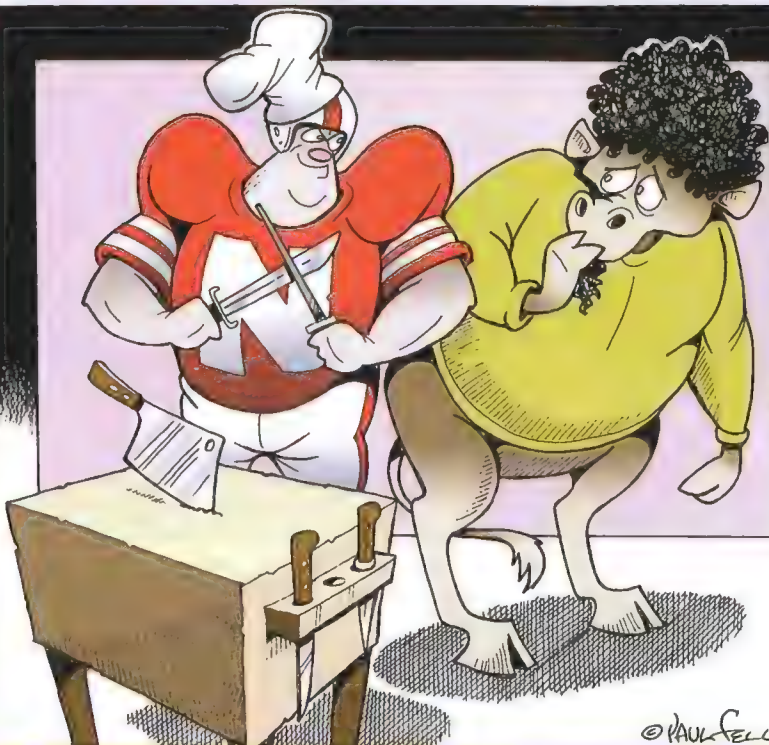
WRX	4	Patrick Williams*	6-2	200	So.
	48	Cody Crawford	5-11	175	So.
LT	77	Tyler Polumbus**	6-8	285	Jr.
	69	Jeremy Hauck	6-4	280	RFr.
LG	66	Brian Daniels***	6-4	300	Sr.
	72	Devin Head	6-4	290	RFr.
C	57	Bryce MacMartin*	6-2	285	Sr.
	58	Mark Fenton***	6-4	295	Sr.
RG	76	Daniel Sanders*	6-3	310	So.
	63	Jack Tipton**	6-3	295	Sr.
RT	76	Edwin Harrison**	6-4	295	Jr.
	50	Paul Backowski	6-6	295	RFr.
TE	87	Riar Geer	6-3	240	RFr.
	84	Tyson DeVree	6-6	245	Jr.
WRZ	17	Alvin Barnett**	6-0	185	Jr.
	83	Dusty Sprague**	6-4	195	Jr.
QB	7	Bernard Jackson	6-0	200	Jr.
	5	Patrick Devenny	6-3	240	RFr.
TB	2	Hugh Charles**	5-8	190	Jr.
	37	Mell Holliday	5-8	205	Sr.
FB	32	Maurice Cantrell	6-0	235	So.
	43	Samson Jagoras	5-10	230	Jr.
PK	16	Mason Crosby***	6-2	215	Sr.

COLORADO OFFENSE

LE	53	Abraham Wright***	6-3	245	Sr.
	47	Alonzo Barrett**	6-3	235	So.
DT	86	George Hypolite*	6-2	285	So.
	51	Alex Ligon*	6-3	275	Sr.
NT	94	Brandon Nicolas	6-3	275	So.
	96	Marcus Jones	6-4	300	Sr.
RE	33	Walter Boye-Doe***	6-2	250	Sr.
	91	Maurice Lucas*	6-4	240	So.
SLB	40	Brad Jones*	6-4	225	So.
	13	Joe Sanders*	6-3	215	Jr.
MLB	49	Thaddeus Washington***	5-11	240	Sr.
	98	Michael Sipili	6-1	235	Fr.
WLB	44	Jordon Dizon**	6-0	225	Jr.
	45	Jeff Smart	6-0	205	RFr.
LCB	10	Terry Washington*	5-10	195	Sr.
	23	Lorenzo Sims Jr.***	5-11	185	Sr.
FS	42	Benjamin Burney*	5-11	190	So.
	23	Lorenzo Sims Jr.***	5-11	185	Sr.
SS	25	Lionel Harris*	6-0	190	Jr.
	20	Terry Wilson	5-11	200	So.
RCB	26	Terrence Wheatley**	5-10	180	Jr.
	6	Gardner McKay*	5-11	160	So.
P	90	Isaac Garden	6-0	180	Jr.

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'07 Class Could Feature Defense

Six defensive prospects list NU among their leaders

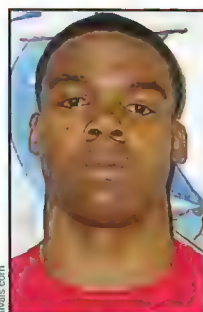
By Rick Shaw

In Bill Callahan's first full season as head coach of Nebraska, a great deal of recruiting focus was placed on stocking up on talent at the offensive skill positions. The Husker's 2005 recruiting class was headlined by quarterbacks Zac Taylor and Harrison Beck, running backs Leon Jackson, Cody Glenn and Marlon Lucky and receiver Chris Brooks.

The Huskers have seen the fruits of this labor on the field this season, as



Brandon Joiner



Brandon Herron

NU currently ranks among the nation's best in offensive production.

Much of the recruiting focus this season is being placed on upgrading talent and depth on the defensive side of the ball. Eight out of 14 of the athletes currently committed to Nebraska are defensive players. The Husker staff hopes to add, at least, another six to seven defensive prospects to that total before signing day in February.

Here's a look at six prospects giving serious consideration to

Nebraska. All make their living on the defensive side of the ball, and all consider the Huskers among their current leaders.

Brandon Joiner almost committed to the Huskers during his Oct. 20 visit to Lincoln. The 6-foot-3, 220-pound defensive end out of Killeen (Shoemaker), Texas, held off, however, and now plans to make his decision by Thanksgiving.

"I'm going to visit Texas A&M on Nov. 10," Joiner said. "Most likely, I'll make my decision within a week or two after that trip."

"I was about to commit to Nebraska during my visit there in October, but I wanted to see Texas A&M, too. Nebraska is the top school I've seen up until now. A school might be able to match Nebraska, but I don't see it getting any better than that."

Joiner, rated the No. 56 prospect in the state by Rivals.com, earned first-team all-district honors as a junior

NEBRASKA COMMITMENTS FOR 2007

Player	Pos.	Ht.	Wt.	40	Hometown (School)
Anthony Blue	DB	5-10	172	4.57	Cedar Hill, Texas
Quentin Castille	RB	6-1	234	4.6	La Porte, Texas
Jared Crick	DE	6-6	245	4.8	Cozad, Neb.
Demetrious Davis	DT	6-2	286	5.22	St. Joseph, Mo. (Benton)
Jared Glover	DE	6-5	220	4.75	Bixby, Okla.
Patrick Grant	DE	6-4	220	4.51	Lauderdale Lakes, Fla. (Boyd Anderson)
Ian Harris	TE	6-3	217	4.76	San Antonio, Texas (Churchill)
Roy Helu	RB	5-11	206	4.62	Danville, Calif. (San Ramon Valley)
Ryan Hill	TE	6-3	230	4.7	Arvada, Colo. (West)
Blake Lawrence	LB	6-2	199	4.65	Overland Park, Kan. (Shawnee Mission West)
Niles Paul	WR	6-2	210	4.4	Omaha, Neb. (North)
Shawn Sullivan	DB	5-11	182	4.4	Brenham, Texas
DeAndre West	DB	6-1	195	4.4	Oakland, Calif. (Wilson Prep)
Patrick Witt	QB	6-4	215	4.95	Wylie, Texas

For more daily recruiting information, visit HuskersIllustrated.com, a member of the Rivals.com network.

after compiling 87 tackles and four sacks. Boasting 4.5-second speed in the 40-yard dash to go along with a 305-pound bench press, Joiner has garnered close to 20 Division I scholarship offers this fall. Though he's visited both Arizona State and Purdue, he admits that his final decision will likely come down to the Huskers or Aggies.

Another Texas blue-chipper, linebacker prospect Brandon Herron, has also come close to committing to the Nebraska staff this fall. In fact, the 6-2, 200-pound athlete (4.55-second 40/37-inch vertical jump) out of Fort Bend Dulles High in Sugarland, told reporters repeatedly back in September that he fully intended to play for the Huskers in 2007.

Though he's backed off of the stance considerably in the past few weeks, Herron said that Nebraska is still one of his top choices.

"Nebraska is still one of my top schools," Herron said. "I just want to leave my options open and not shut the door on anyone right now. Nebraska is still right at the top, and I hope to visit them after my season ends."

Oklahoma State, Minnesota, Michigan, Missouri, Colorado, among others, are also still in active pursuit of the cat-quick linebacker from the outskirts of Houston.

Another top athlete from the Lone Star State, Travis Lewis, considers the Huskers among his top two college options. The 6-1, 213-pound safety/linebacker out of Lee High School in San Antonio visited Lincoln during the weekend of Oct. 20. Though he's, admittedly, high on Nebraska at the current time, he plans to take an official visit to Oklahoma before announcing a final decision.

"Nebraska was already on top of my list, but going and visiting them to see that game (against Texas) with the facilities, stadium and everything was awesome," Lewis said. "It really wowed me."

Lewis is one of the top athletes in Texas, boasting a 4.34 40 and a 34-inch vertical. Rated the No. 46 prospect in the state by Rivals.com, Lewis hold



Travis Lewis

RECRUITING NOTES

Recruits Praise NU Assistant

By Sean Stevens

In the past couple of years, the "ace in the hole" for Nebraska in recruiting has been defensive line coach John Blake. The affable Blake has closed the deal on many of the Huskers' biggest signees since joining head coach Bill Callahan's staff. The 2007 recruiting class currently stands at 14 commitments, but Blake has only been the lead man on two of those players (defensive ends Jared Glover and Patrick Grant). That doesn't mean that he hasn't been working hard this year, however.

Among Blake's targets are some of the top players in the nation. Those types of players tend to let the recruiting process play out a little longer before making a decision.

For example, Blake is leading the Huskers' recruitment of North Fort Myers, Fla., running back sensation Noel Devine. While Devine has offers from around the nation, Nebraska has been among his top schools since as early as March.

"Noel really likes the coaches from Nebraska because he feels that they spend a lot of time with him about what is important not only in football, but academically as well so I think he has built a strong relationship with them," said his coach James Iandoli.

Another Blake recruit among Rivals' top 250 players nationally is defensive tackle Chris Perry of Keller (Texas). The 6-foot-3, 319-pounder gave an oral pledge to Miami in early June but has since opened up his recruitment and will visit Nebraska for the Colorado game the day after Thanksgiving.

"Because of Coach Blake," he said regarding why he plans to visit Lincoln. "Me and him have got a good relationship, and I trust him. I don't know, but we keep it real and we talk a whole lot. He can relate to stuff I'm going through a whole lot. I want to go up there and see if I like it or not. I know they have a good D-line, so I want to see how they practice, see what my comfort level with the community is, and meet their academic people and whatever."

The No. 3-ranked recruit in Oklahoma for 2007 is 6-foot, 185-pound athlete Gerald Jones of Oklahoma City. Jones, with offers from the likes of Florida, Michigan, Notre Dame and Oklahoma, also holds Blake in high regard.

"Yeah, there are a lot of coaches that I'm real close with . . . and I have a real close-type relationship with Coach Blake at Nebraska," he said.

Hollywood, Fla., safety Eain Smith visited Lincoln for the Kansas game in late September.

When he was asked what was the primary reason he decided to make the trip he responded, "Coach Blake . . . he's cool. He's a good coach."

Finally, there is defensive end prospect Brandon Joiner of Killeen, Texas, who spent the weekend of the Texas game in Lincoln.

"Coach Blake of Nebraska is one of the best coaches I've seen in quite a while," he said.

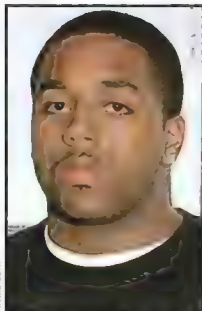
When Nebraska signs its 2007 recruiting class in February, you can be certain that Blake will have had a hand in the decisions of many of the players in the class. ■



John Blake

scholarship offers from Nebraska, Oklahoma, Oklahoma State, Arizona State, Missouri and Purdue, among others.

Chris Perry is one of the top-rated defensive tackle prospects in the country. Rated four-stars by Rivals.com, Perry originally committed to Miami back in June.



Chris Perry

However, rumors of coaching changes in south Florida, along with a growing relationship with Nebraska assistant coach John Blake, have the 6-3, 320-pound lineman from Keller (Fossil Ridge), Texas, giving a long, hard look at spending the next four years in Lincoln.

Perry is scheduled to take an official visit to Nebraska on Thanksgiving weekend to watch the Huskers take on Colorado. He's also considering taking visits to Oklahoma, Florida and Texas A&M.

Over in Louisiana, middle linebacker Earl Patin still hasn't come down from the high he experienced on his early September visit to

Nebraska. The 6-1, 230-pound line-backer out of Southern Lab High in Baton Rouge, admits that he's still leaning toward signing with the Huskers. He still plans, however, to visit both Florida and LSU.

"I still feel the same way about Nebraska as I did right after my visit there," Patin said. "I like all of their coaches. I'll have to see how it goes, but it's looking good for them. They're No. 1 on my list right now."

Rated the nation's No. 12 inside linebacker prospect, by Rivals.com, Patin is considering offers from Auburn, Clemson, Florida, LSU and Ole Miss, in addition to Nebraska. He was a first-team all-state linebacker as a junior, after tallying 80 tackles and six sacks.

David Ross actually delivered his pledge to Nebraska coach Bill Callahan during his visit to Lincoln on Oct. 20. The 6-0, 175-pound, four-star cornerback prospect out of Compton (Dominguez), Calif., admits, however, that he still wants to



Earl Patin

take a couple of more visits before setting that decision in stone.

"I'm about 80 percent sure that I'll sign with Nebraska," Ross said. "I'd kind of like to visit both Oregon and Washington, though, before wrapping things up 100 percent."

"Nebraska has always been the school that I have always wanted to be at, but I just can't judge without comparing it to another school or two."



David Ross

Rated the 25 prospect in the state by Rivals.com, Ross also is considering offers from California, Michigan, Ole Miss, Oregon and Washington, among a host of others.

The Huskers are in good shape to load up on several other defensive blue-chippers before putting the locks on their recruiting class of 2007. When the dust settles, as much as two thirds of this class may be comprised of defensive players. ■

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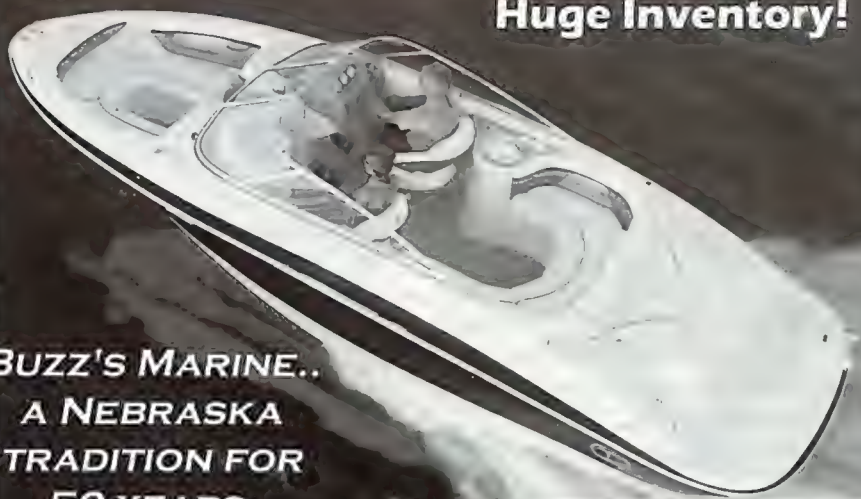
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BASKETBALL

Sadler's Opener Is Memorable

Doc Sadler wanted his debut as Nebraska men's basketball coach to be memorable. And "it's one we'll definitely remember," he said following his injury-hampered Huskers' 74-72 exhibition victory against the University of Nebraska-Kearney at the Devaney Sports Center.

"We wanted to make sure concessions stayed open the whole game," he said.



Ryan Anderson

Ryan Anderson, one of three Cornhusker freshmen on the court at the end, hit a 3-point shot with 1.9 seconds remaining for the victory against

NCAA Division II Nebraska-Kearney.

"As soon as I caught it, I knew it was going down," said Anderson, one of two freshmen who started for the Cornhuskers. Sek Henry, the other, led them in scoring with 21 points.



Sek Henry

Henry was "pretty aggressive, especially for a freshman," Sadler said. "The thing that Sek has got to learn, and not just Sek but all of them, is that defensively is what we're

going to be noted for."

And Sadler wasn't happy about the way his young team played defense.

Nebraska was without Aleks Maric (appendectomy), Kyle Marks and walk-on Paul Velander. In addition, Chris Balham left the game with leg spasms and couldn't return.

And Marcus Perry played despite not practicing for a week because of a foot problem. "He's going to be a guy that's going to be able, probably, just to play on game nights," said Sadler.



Doc Sadler watches the action during Nebraska's exhibition opener against Nebraska-Kearney on Nov. 6.

The team's health likely will be as much of an issue as defense early in the season. The Cornhuskers were scheduled to play a second exhibition against Southern Illinois-Edwardsville before opening against Nebraska-Omaha and then playing intrastate rival Creighton three nights later.

Nebraska can't afford to be without anyone on the roster. "This team isn't talented enough to not have the

full team," Sadler said. "I mean, it's going to be somebody different every night."

NO FEAR

Anderson, a 6-foot-4, 195-pound guard from Seattle, wasn't intimidated by his starting assignment. "Not with the practices we have; I don't think there's too much to be scared of," he said.

He quickly, and fully, bought into Sadler's system.



"This is what I told the team after the game: 'You're probably not going to do that in any Big 12 games have 36 points at the half. So you'd better be really good defensively. It had better be 20-18, 22-20, (from) what I know about the Big 12,'" said Sadler.

INCREASED INTEREST

Even though the exhibition opener was played on a Monday night, it drew 6,453 to the Devaney Sports Center, an indication of renewed interest in the program.

Afterward, Sadler reiterated to reporters "what I've told you all from day one; I'm the luckiest guy in the world, and the only thing I wish I'd have done different on Aug. 8 was bought lottery tickets. To have an opportunity to coach at the University of Nebraska . . . it's set now. Believe me, I know that nobody else we play really cares about how I feel. But I was excited. I was nervous."

At this point, "I don't really want to talk about Doc," he said. "It's not about me."

But, he added with a smile, "I appreciate it."

WHERE SHE BELONGS

With the return of Jelena Spiric, Husker senior Chelsea Aubry is back playing power forward. After Spiric was sidelined for the season by a knee injury, Aubry moved to a wing position to help fill the void. She "took one for the team, I like to say," coach Connie Yori said.

"She gave up what could have been a really good junior year for her in many ways to play out of position and do what we felt like was in the best interests of our team."

Aubry's scoring and rebounding averages dropped compared to her sophomore season.

"She was not as good of a scorer as she was her sophomore year, largely because of her match-ups. She did not have the opportunity to face four (power forward) players," said Yori.

"She was being guarded by quicker kids and that was difficult for her. We're much better on offense right now than we were a year ago at this stage and largely because of the improvements throughout our program, and then also having Jelena back and moving Chelsea back to her natural position."

The Huskers provided evidence of their offensive potential in a pair of exhibition victories, 122-55 against the University of Nebraska-Kearney and 97-59 against Nebraska-Omaha. ■



Chelsea Aubry

"For me to play, I'm going to do whatever Coach wants me to do, by any means necessary," Anderson said. "I believe 100 percent in his system. I believe everything he tells me. I believe I would go jump off a bridge if Doc told me to go jump off a bridge. I believe in Doc."

Jumping off a bridge won't be necessary. Playing defense will be, however.

Despite not scoring until 4 1/2 minutes into the game, on a Henry drive and dunk, and then going scoreless for nearly 4 more minutes, Nebraska had 36 points at halftime of the exhibition.

MEN'S SCHEDULE

Nov. 6	*Nebraska-Kearney, W 74-72
Nov. 11	*SIU-Edwardsville
Nov. 14	Nebraska-Omaha
Nov. 18	Creighton
Nov. 21	Lubbock Christian
Nov. 27	Arkansas-Pine Bluff
Nov. 29	North Texas (FSN Midwest)
Dec. 2	@Rutgers
Dec. 9	@Oregon (FSN)
Dec. 17	Alabama A&M
Dec. 20	**Wyoming
Dec. 22	**San Francisco/Hawaii
Dec. 23	**TBA
Dec. 30	***Miami (FSN Midwest)
Jan. 3	Savannah State
Jan. 6	Western Kentucky
Jan. 10	@Iowa State (FSN Midwest)
Jan. 13	Oklahoma State (ESPN+)
Jan. 17	@Oklahoma (FSN Midwest)
Jan. 20	Colorado (ESPN+)
Jan. 24	Texas (FSN Midwest)
Jan. 27	@Kansas St. (FSN Midwest)
Jan. 29	Kansas (ESPN)
Feb. 3	@Missouri (ESPN+)
Feb. 6	@Texas Tech (FSN Midwest)
Feb. 10	Texas A&M (FSN Midwest)
Feb. 13	Kansas State (FSN Midwest)
Feb. 17	@Kansas (ESPN+)
Feb. 21	@Baylor (FSN Midwest)
Feb. 24	Missouri (ESPN+)
Feb. 28	Iowa State
Mar. 3	@Colorado (ESPN+)
Mar. 8-11	Big 12 Championship, Oklahoma City

*Exhibition

**Rainbow Classic, Honolulu, Hawaii

***Orange Bowl Classic, Miami, Fla.

WOMEN'S SCHEDULE

Nov. 1	*Nebraska-Kearney, W 122-55
Nov. 4	*Nebraska-Omaha, W 97-59
Nov. 10	**Arizona State
Nov. 12	**Florida Atlantic
Nov. 13	**New Mexico
Nov. 17	Cal State Fullerton
Nov. 24	@UC Irvine
Nov. 26	@USC
Nov. 28	Texas-Pan American
Dec. 5	Minnesota
Dec. 9	Michigan
Dec. 16	Northwestern
Dec. 19	@Creighton (Civic)
Dec. 21	Nicholls State
Dec. 28	***NC State
Dec. 29	***Florida/Alabama State
Jan. 3	@Texas
Jan. 6	Oklahoma
Jan. 13	@Kansas
Jan. 17	Kansas State
Jan. 20	@Missouri
Jan. 24	@Texas A&M
Jan. 27	Kansas
Jan. 31	Iowa State
Feb. 3	Baylor (FSN)
Feb. 7	@Kansas State (FSN Midwest)
Feb. 10	@Colorado (FSN)
Feb. 14	Texas Tech
Feb. 17	Missouri
Feb. 20	@Iowa State FSN Midwest)
Feb. 24	@Oklahoma State
Feb. 27	Colorado
Mar. 6-10	Big 12 Championship, Oklahoma City

*Exhibition

**Veterans Day Classic, Tempe, Ariz.

**Big 12 Tournament, Dallas, Texas

***State Farm Classic, Gainesville, Fla.

Positives Out of a Negative

Watching can be a struggle for injured Husker Houghtelling

By Todd Henrichs

For Christina Houghtelling, this volleyball season has amounted to a coaching practicum. As she talks with coaches during the week and stands with her teammates on the sideline during matches, Houghtelling has to think more like a coach than last year's national volleyball player of the year.

"She wants to be a coach, and she's learning a whole different perspective of the game from watching," said Nebraska coach John Cook, whose Huskers have carried on without the injured Houghtelling to win 22 straight matches and set their sights on another Big 12 championship.

"It's hard on her, but she's going to grow as an athlete and as a person, and she'll have a perspective as a coach someday for what it's like not to play or be injured," Cook added. "There are a lot of positives that you can take out of a negative."

For her part, Houghtelling is sure that that's true. But for the competitive athlete who expected to be leading Nebraska in its bid to win a national championship in Omaha this winter, finding the positives as she recovers from offseason surgeries to repair her shoulder and knee is sometimes difficult, Houghtelling said.

She thought she had prepared her-

self for the worst, yet when her teammates were all smiles celebrating a wildly emotional win at rival Texas earlier this season, Houghtelling had to seek out a secluded spot in Gregory Gym to cry.

"I called my parents after the game, and said, 'It doesn't feel like I'm a part of this,' " said Houghtelling, who has remained a co-captain even as she has had to spend time away from her team this season to pay attention to a heavier-than-usual class schedule and six-day-a-week rehabilitation sessions.

"When this whole thing started, I thought it would be a lot worse to see them win," Houghtelling added. "But it's so much worse to see them struggle out there because I want to go out there and make a difference.

"It's not a fun time for me right now."

Houghtelling, who first underwent shoulder surgery after experiencing pain on the Huskers' training trip to Japan and China last spring, remains on track to rejoin the team for what promises to be a tremendous season for Nebraska in 2007.

Her lower body is good to go — the minor knee surgery was scheduled once the decision had been made to have Houghtelling sit out this season — and she's even tried hitting and serving a little bit with her surgi-



cally repaired right shoulder. At different times, she's had to back off because of some soreness, but she's still thinking big picture.

Although doctors have assured both Houghtelling and Cook that she's ahead of schedule, rotator cuff surgery is no quick fix for a volleyball player.

"I have to realize that we're not in a big hurry," said Houghtelling, who emerged virtually from nowhere to be voted the nation's top player last year. Houghtelling, only a part-time starter as a sophomore, was MVP of both the preseason Volleyball Showcase and the NCAA Omaha Regional last season.

Against top-10 opponents, Houghtelling averaged 4.0 kills, 2.5 digs and 1.3 blocks a game.

Given that history, it's hard for Nebraska fans not to wonder what the



Injured senior Christina Houghtelling (right) watches from the sidelines with teammates Amanda Gates (left) and Brooke Bartek.

Huskers would be like with Houghtelling on the court this season. No doubt, there are times when Houghtelling wonders the same thing.

Yet, the senior from Cambridge is channeling her energy into recovery. Since arriving at Nebraska as a raw talent back in 2003, Houghtelling has earned a reputation as a hard-worker.

That certainly hasn't changed since the injury.

"She's a maniac," said Cook. "She shows that when you go through something like this, you've got to keep battling and work hard everyday. Our team sees how hard she works."

Her work ethic is just one way that Houghtelling has helped to lead the team this season. There have been nights when she's been part-cheer-

leader, like the match against Missouri when she could be seen pumping up teammate Dani Mancuso at every opportunity.

Mancuso, the senior who has replaced Houghtelling in the starting lineup, produced eight kills on 16 swings against the Tigers.

But at other times, Houghtelling has played the role of a stern outside observer. When Nebraska wasn't playing well, especially early in the season, senior libero Dani Busboom recalls Houghtelling saying things like "This isn't Nebraska volleyball," and "I can't even stand watching," to the surprise of teammates in the locker room.

Houghtelling said she has struggled with deciding when is the right

time to speak up and when is the right time to step back. But she says she's learned about each of her teammates and about what a coach must go through in pulling everything together.

"It's a lot easier to see when you're watching it but around it all the time than it is when you're playing and you just see people for their results," Houghtelling said. "Then, you don't see what goes into it, like what they actually need."

"I've learned to recognize their different personalities and try to help them with what they need. That's the best I can do for this team." ■

Todd Henrichs covers the Nebraska volleyball team for the Lincoln Journal Star. He can be reached at 473-7439 or thenrichs@journalstar.com

RESULTS, SCHEDULE

Aug. 29 San Diego

W 3-0

Labor Day Tournament At Lincoln, Neb.

Sept. 1 St. Mary's W 3-0

Sept. 2 Middle Tennessee St. W 3-0

Sept. 3 Long Beach State W 3-0

Players Challenge At Lincoln, Neb.

Sept. 8 Louisville W 3-0

Sept. 9 Cal Poly W 3-0

Sept. 10 Minnesota W 3-1

Sept. 13 Kansas W 3-0

Sept. 16 @Oklahoma W 3-0

Sept. 20 Iowa State W 3-0

Sept. 23 Texas Tech W 3-0

Sept. 24 @Creighton W 3-1

Sept. 30 @Baylor W 3-1

Oct. 4 Kansas State W 3-0

Oct. 7 @Texas A&M W 3-0

Oct. 11 @Missouri W 3-0

Oct. 14 Colorado W 3-0

Oct. 18 @Texas W 3-2

Oct. 25 Missouri W 3-0

Oct. 28 @Kansas State W 3-0

Nov. 1 @Texas Tech W 3-0

Nov. 4 Oklahoma W 3-0

Nov. 8 @Iowa State W 3-1

Nov. 11 @Colorado 8 p.m.

Nov. 15 Texas A&M 7 p.m.

Nov. 18 Baylor 7 p.m.

Nov. 22 @Kansas 7 p.m.

Nov. 25 Texas 7 p.m.

Nov. 30-Dec. 3 NCAA First/Second Rounds At Campus Sites

Dec. 8-9 NCAA Regionals At Campus Sites

Dec 14-16 NCAA Final Four At Qwest Center (Omaha, Neb.)



Last season as a junior, Jason Wassung finished 12th in the all-around at the 2006 NCAA Championships.

Focusing More Than Ever

Wassung stepping into leadership role as senior

BY KATELYN KERKHOVE

Nebraska gymnastics coach Francis Allen considers himself a teacher. And his job, he said, is teaching "monkeys," a term of endearment for his athletes, presumably related to height.

As Allen's team prepares for its 2006-07 season, which begins on Jan.

12 at the Rocky Mountain Open in Colorado Springs, Colo., it appears that one of Allen's top "monkeys" will be senior Jason Wassung.

A strong competitor for the Cornhuskers last year, Wassung was one of two all-arounders to qualify for the individual NCAA Championships at Norman, Okla. He placed 12th overall.

"I got to compete with Oklahoma's team last year when I qualified indi-

vidually, and it was the best, most fun time I've ever had," Wassung said. "The crowd was just awesome."

But this year, he could be even better, Allen said.

While many seniors tend to lay off their final year, Wassung has been the opposite, focusing on his gymnastics more than ever and stepping into a leadership role, according to Allen.

With no injuries holding him out of this year's offseason training, Wassung has been able to add new tricks to his repertoire, something he wasn't able to do earlier in his college career because he suffered from shoulder and knee injuries the past three years.

He struggled through a shoulder injury throughout his freshman sea-

son — he missed the first two meets — waiting to have surgery until the end of competition. His sophomore season, he had trouble with his left knee until an operation, which forced him to sit out over the summer.

"Just finally having a whole summer, it makes you not lose any of your tricks," Wassung said. "If you get hurt and have to sit out for three or four months, you can't learn any new tricks before you have to start doing routines again, so you're pretty much going to be doing the same routines for the next year."

Wassung's favorite addition so far is a "tuck" pull, which he added to his high bar routine. An in-bar trick with a twist, the pull is not used by many college athletes and, Wassung said, it will "be kind of fun to throw in" at competitions.

With the opportunity to learn new tricks and incorporate them into his routines, Wassung has a chance to rank among the top all-arounders in the nation during the season and, if he can stay healthy, at the end of the season, when it really counts, Allen said.

On the mental side, Wassung said

the months of preparation will pay off at competition as he will know he prepared to the best of his ability. The number of repetitions he has done so far have already boosted his confidence, he said.

But more than the mental and physical aspects of gymnastics, Allen said, he has seen a change in Wassung's attitude this fall. The way he works out, the intensity of his training and his overall demeanor have helped him mature into the leader Allen has been looking for since Wassung joined the team in 2004 from East High School in Lincoln, Neb., where he earned, among other things, five state USAG titles in the all-around, four Region IV championships and a spot on the Junior National Team in 1998.

"He is the same person he was last year, but he's just in a different mode," Allen said. "He's got this mode of, 'I'm a senior, I've been around here and I've got something to prove.' I don't know what it is exactly, but I wish I had a formula for it because I'd give it to these other guys."

Fellow all-arounder, junior

Stephen Tetrault, will also be in on the Huskers' charge to the top this season and, Allen said, the two have worked well together this fall.

With a strong group of freshman in the mix as well, the Huskers could improve to top six in the NCAA finals, something they haven't done since 1999.

Allen said this could be why his two top athletes have such positive outlooks. "I think last year they felt like, 'We're not going to be good, why bust our butts?'" Allen said. "But this year they realize that, 'Wow, we're going to be good, let's get going.' They have really taken on a whole different profile."

Even with a chance to move up in the individual rankings, Wassung said the most important goal of his season has to do with his team reaching the finals. Competing with Oklahoma last year showed him how amazing the team finals could be. "My biggest goal has always been the team," Wassung said. "Because making team finals the next night is the best competition ever."

There is no "monkey business" about that. ■



					
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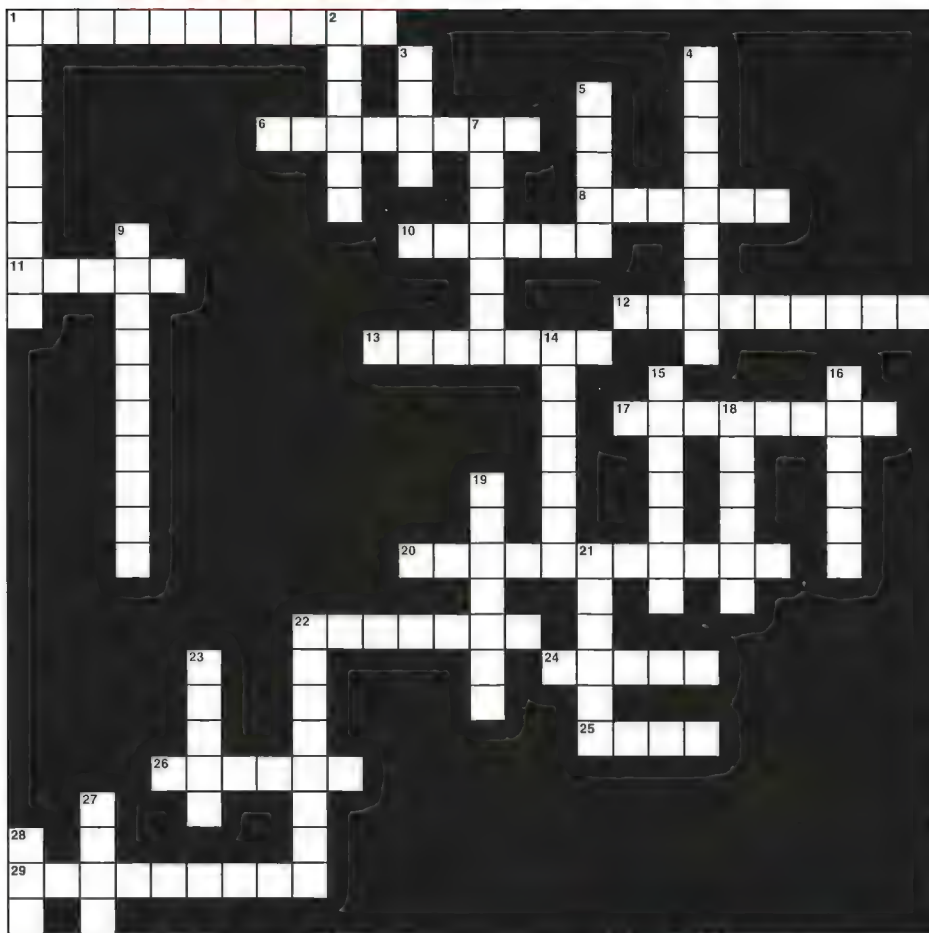
ACROSS

- 1 Brandon Jackson's home state
- 6 Tight end from Texas
- 8 Offensive line coach
- 10 Running backs coach
- 11 Terrence Nunn's home state
- 12 Stadium for Big 12 Championship
- 13 Freshman guard starter vs. Missouri
- 17 Intercepted pass vs. Missouri
- 20 Wears No. 62
- 22 Colorado campus location
- 24 Colorado color
- 25 Leading tackler vs. Missouri
- 26 Wears No. 13 (defense)
- 29 Colorado nickname

DOWN

- 1 Nate Swift's home state
- 2 Threw touchdown pass vs. Missouri
- 3 Colorado color
- 4 Wears No. 54 (defense)
- 5 Ex-Husker in 2005 Super Bowl
- 7 Wears No. 54 (offense)
- 9 2007 nonconference road opponent
- 14 1993 Butkus Award winner
- 15 Colorado head coach
- 16 Opponent in 2007 opener
- 18 Newest NU player in College Hall of Fame
- 19 Former Colorado head coach
- 21 Wears No. 13 (offense)
- 22 2003 NU All-American
- 23 2002 NU All-American
- 27 Wears No. 61
- 28 Network for NU-Colorado telecast

Answers in December issue



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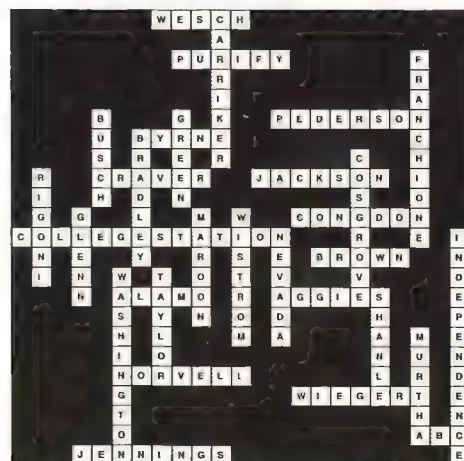
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*Taylor says he feels 'most comfortable,'
when Huskers 'throw the ball every play'*



**Mike
BABCOCK**

LET'S FIND A SIMILAR FINISH in Nebraska football history to which the one Zac Taylor directed against Texas A&M on a breezy but pleasant day in College Station, Texas, could be compared.

I'm studying the media guide, perusing the season-by-season results.

How about the dramatic drive Scott Frost directed without benefit of timeouts against Missouri to pull the Cornhuskers into a tie and send the game into overtime, and a Nebraska victory?

OK, on second thought, let's not bother trying to express the significance of what Taylor did in terms of something that happened in the past. It can stand on its own merits.

And whether it was his finest moment . . . well, "I'll let you be the judge of that," he said after tossing a 9-yard touchdown pass to Maurice Purify with 21 seconds remaining.

It was, however, "the most fun I've ever had," he said.

The particulars are these, and they will be seared in the memory of those among a crowd of 83,336 at Kyle Field — on both sides — as well as those watching on ABC regional television.

Oh yes, if your video recorder malfunctioned for some reason, you're probably distraught about now because this was a finish and individual performance worth preserving.

Anyway, so here's how the drama unfolded.

Midway through the fourth quarter of Nebraska's Big 12 North Division title-clinching, 28-27 victory, A&M took a 27-21 lead on a 1-yard touchdown run set up by an underthrown, 44-yard pass thrown by the Aggies' 6-foot, 274-pound running back Jorvorskie Lane.

With 7:28 remaining, the Cornhuskers set about trying to respond. Seven plays and a holding penalty later, they were 7 yards from where they began, second-and-26 from their own 27.

Taylor threw a pass that the Aggies' Mark Dodge intercepted and returned 16 yards to the Nebraska 29. With 2:50 remaining, the Cornhuskers were in dire straits. "I gave them great field position," Taylor said. "You have to hope they don't bust a big play and (then) miss a field goal."

To make matters worse, Nebraska had only two timeouts with which to stop the clock.

On first down, the Aggies' Mike Goodson gained 2 yards and was forced out of bounds by cornerback Andre

Jones. The Cornhuskers would stop the clock after each of the next two plays, also runs, the first by Chris Alexander for 1 yard, the second by Stephen McGee for 2 yards.

Facing fourth-and-5, A&M's Layne Neumann attempted a 42-yard field goal. Nebraska sophomore defensive end Barry Turner broke through to deflect the ball for possession at the Cornhusker 24.

No timeouts, 76 yards to cover, and 1 minute and 57 seconds to do it . . .

Taylor would throw 11 passes in the next 1:36, one of which was charged to the team because he spiked the ball to stop the clock. The first eight passes went incomplete, complete, incomplete, complete, incomplete, complete, incomplete, complete, three consecutive incompletes.

Then came the completion to Purify, for the victory.

Taylor wasn't nervous, or so he claimed. "That's when I feel most comfortable, when we throw the ball every play," he said. "That's what any quarterback loves to do."

"That's backyard football right there."

Backyard maybe, but sophisticated, too.

He mixed up his receivers, completing two of the passes to wide receiver Todd Peterson and others to I-back Brandon Jackson and wide receiver Dan Erickson, who had one career reception, a 7-yarder against Nicholls State. Erickson had contributed mostly on special teams.

"We felt we could move the ball," said Taylor. In that situation "we're going to be confident. We have 2 minutes left, and we have the ball; we're going to be confident."

Taylor finished the game completing 21 of 35 passes for 267 yards and two touchdowns. The first covered 4 yards to Peterson for the Cornhuskers' third touchdown.

On that play, Taylor broke school records for touchdown passes in a season, 21, and passing yardage in a career, 5,193. Vince Ferragamo had held the first record since 1976, and Dave Humm had held the second (5,035 yards) since finishing in Bob Devaney's final season, 1972.

"I wouldn't be thinking about it if we had lost this game," Taylor said of breaking the long-standing records. "I didn't know (about the records) until after the game was over."

What he did know was, "honestly, I wouldn't have wanted to win this game any other way. If you had told me we were going to win it by 17 points or win it on the last play of the game, I'd probably choose the last play of the game. It's something everybody's going to remember."

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